

A STUDY IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE  
OF SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF MAN  
AS THEY RELATE TO THE WORK OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COUNSELORS

by

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## PROLEGOMENA

In Act Two of T. S. Eliot's play, The Cocktail Party, one of the main characters, a young woman named Celia Copelstone, seeks the counsel of a doctor who has been recommended to her by a friend. Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly is the doctor, whose role in the play is defined primarily by what others expect of him. It is apparent that Celia comes to Sir Henry because she is troubled, and the scene in his office is typical of a patient seeking professional help from a psychotherapist.

The conversation between Celia and Sir Henry, however, is not typical of the therapist's consulting room. Being invited to describe her present state of mind, Celia begins,

Well, there are two things I can't understand,  
Which you might consider symptoms. But first I must tell you  
That I should really like to think there's something wrong with me--  
Because if there isn't, then there's something wrong,  
Or at least, very different from what it seemed to be,  
With the world itself--and that's much more frightening!  
That would be terrible. So I'd rather believe  
There is something wrong with me, that could be put right.  
I'd do anything you told me, to get back to normality.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Henry comments that they must find out more about her before normality can be defined, and asks her to describe her first symptom. Celia speaks of what she calls "an awareness of solitude." She explains that she means not simply being by herself, and refers to her discovery that "one is always alone." She continues,

. . . . everyone's alone--or so it seems to me.  
They make noises, and think they are talking to each other;

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<sup>1</sup>T. S. Eliot, The Cocktail Party (The Complete Poems and Plays).  
New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952), p. 359

They make faces, and think they understand each other.  
And I'm sure that they don't. Is that a delusion?<sup>2</sup>

Sir Henry postpones his answer, and bids Celia to describe her other symptom. She says,

That's stranger still  
It sounds ridiculous--but the only word for it  
That I can find, is a sense of sin.<sup>3</sup>

Again she wonders if this makes her "abnormal," and once more Sir Henry reminds her that they have yet to determine what is normal for her. He asks what she means by a sense of sin.

Celia states that she doesn't mean "sin in the ordinary sense," which is "being immoral." She adds that she has "never noticed that immorality was accompanied by a sense of sin."<sup>4</sup>

Then, talking of her "conventional" upbringing, Celia says,

I had always been taught to disbelieve in sin.  
Oh, I don't mean that it was ever mentioned!  
But anything wrong, from our point of view  
Was either bad form, or was psychological.  
And bad form always led to disaster  
Because the people one knew disapproved of it.  
I don't worry much about form myself--  
But when everything's bad form, or mental kinks,  
You either become bad form, and cease to care,  
Or else, if you care, you must be kinky.<sup>5</sup>

Trying to explain what she means by her suspected psychological "kink," Celia concludes her description of her sense of sin, saying,

It's not the feeling of anything I've ever done,  
Which I might get away from, or of anything in me  
I could get rid of--but of emptiness, of failure  
Towards someone, or something, outside myself;  
And I feel I must . . . atone--is that the word?  
Can you treat a patient for such a state of mind?<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 360.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 361.    <sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

Sir Henry opines that Celia's condition is curable, but she must choose her own treatment. He proceeds, then, to outline the choice she must make. If she wishes, he can help to reconcile her to the "human condition," which he suggests is seen in the conventional kind of life she already knows, in which people

Maintain themselves by the common routine,  
 Learn to avoid excessive expectation,  
 Become tolerant of themselves and others,  
 Giving and taking in the usual actions  
 What there is to give and take. They do not repine;  
 Are contented with . . . casual talk before the fire  
 Two people who know they do not understand each other,  
 Breeding children whom they do not understand  
 And who will never understand them.<sup>7</sup>

But Celia, referring to a vision of something more in life, rejects this form of "treatment," which seems to her a "betrayal" of her vision. So Sir Henry outlines the other choice open to her:

There is another way, if you have the courage.  
 The first I could describe in familiar terms  
 Because you have seen it, as we all have seen it,  
 Illustrated, more or less, in the lives of those about us.  
 The second is unknown, and so requires faith---  
 The kind of faith that issues from despair.  
 The destination cannot be described;  
 You will know very little until you get there;  
 You will journey blind. But the way leads towards possession  
 Of what you have sought for in the wrong place.<sup>8</sup>

Intrigued by this description of the "second way," Celia inquires further about it. She is told that either way means "loneliness---and communion." What should she do, she asks. Sir Henry reminds her again that it is her choice, and she, finding it unthinkable that she return to "everyday life," chooses the second way. With her "treatment" yet

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 363-4.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 364-5.

to be worked out in detail, she leaves the doctor's office as he says to her, "Go in Peace, my daughter./Work out your salvation with diligence."<sup>9</sup>

The final scene of the play, like the opening scene, is a cocktail party, which takes place two years after the scene in Sir Henry's office. Celia is not there, and an inquiry into her whereabouts reveals the outcome of her "treatment." She has joined a nursing order of nuns, and lost her life in an insurrection of heathen natives on a little known distant island. "It's the waste that I resent," comments one of the guests upon hearing of Celia's death. Sir Henry responds by suggesting that it was not a waste--that Celia freely chose her way of life, and freely risked death. "And if that is not a happy death, what death is happy?" he concludes.<sup>10</sup> The guests at the party, and the audience, are left to answer this question.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 366.    <sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 384.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A scene from a play by T. S. Eliot serves to raise some questions about the nature of man that will be dealt with in this paper. The questions are of particular relevance to members of the helping professions, especially psychotherapists and counselors. Eliot's drama also exemplifies the context of Christian faith and thought, within which this discussion is placed.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Certain general questions regarding the nature of man would seem to need to be faced by practicing counselors and therapists. The questions as presented here form the main divisions of this paper. They are: (1) How may we understand the human predicament, as illustrated by the sense of sin which Celia faces in the play? (2) How may the basic assumptions about man's predicament be spelled out in psychological terms? And (3) what is the meaning of the concepts of healing and health?

#### The Context of the Discussion

The question of human nature is not something that can be discussed in a vacuum. One's view of man is a part of, or is directly related to, one's most fundamental assumptions about life, i.e., one's philosophy or religious beliefs. It is, therefore, appropriate at the beginning of this paper to state that the author's point of view, like that of

T. S. Eliot's, is avowedly Christian. Hence, a scene from The Cocktail Party was deemed useful in providing a starting point for this discussion of the nature of man in a Christian context. It may be noted that the materials chosen for consideration in this paper, the language used, even the wording of the opening questions, have been determined, in large measure, by the Christian bias of the present writer.

This is not to suggest, however, that there is but one way of describing the human condition, even in Christian terms. The writer's prejudices and predilections may find him disagreeing with others who are equally intent upon writing from a Christian point of view. The writer, for instance, draws heavily upon the theology of Paul Tillich, who may speak for some Christians, but certainly not all of them. Disagreement with the writer's views by both Christians and non-Christians is thus to be anticipated, and is regarded, not as an obstacle, but as a stimulus to further debate and research in a continuing quest for truth.

#### The Purpose of the Study

One of the aims of this paper is to present to counselors and psychologists a Christian view of man as a viable option--as one way of understanding the human condition, and of defining the concepts of healing and health. But the questions raised here are hardly peculiar to Christians. Any person practicing one of the healing professions will hold implicit or explicit assumptions regarding the nature of man and his predicament, the meaning of health, and the work of the healer.

The extent to which one's basic assumptions are explicit and actually operative seems to vary from person to person. And the

extent to which those engaged in healing are required, in the course of their training and practice, to examine their basic assumptions also seems to vary. Hence, the second purpose of this study is to invite counselors and psychologists to think through their basic assumptions about the nature of man, and to test those assumptions in their practice as professional healers.

#### The Importance of the Problem

The question of the healer's concepts of human nature is not an idle intellectual game. As Rollo May has expressed it, "the psychologist must continually analyze and clarify his own presuppositions."<sup>1</sup> Speaking of psychologists who serve as therapists and counselors, May continues,

...the one way we can keep the presuppositions underlying our particular method from undue biasing effect is to know consciously what they are and so not absolutize or dogmatize them. Thus we have at least a chance of refraining from forcing our subjects or patients upon our 'procrustean couches' and lopping off, or refusing to see, what does not fit.<sup>2</sup>

May makes it clear that he is not referring merely to the psychological school or the methodology the counselor may adhere to. He is concerned, rather, with the "transcendental conceptions," that is, the "underlying presuppositions which determine the goals of one's activity."<sup>3</sup> May refers, in other words, to the beliefs and values of those who use psychology in the service of helping or healing others.

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<sup>1</sup>Rollo May (ed.), Existential Psychology (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

May's concern for the psychologist's underlying presuppositions is reiterated in a later book, in which he states,

The critical battles between approaches to psychology and psychoanalysis in our culture in the next decades, I propose, will be on the battleground of the image of man--that is to say, on the conceptions of man which underlie empirical research.<sup>4</sup>

If, as May suggests, it is one's "transcendental conceptions" which "determine the goals of one's activity," and "underlie empirical research," the radical importance of the psychologist's image of man seems beyond question. It is what the therapist assumes about man that shapes his understanding of his client's problems and defines the objectives of the counseling process. And those same assumptions determine what the psychologist, as a scientist, deems as needed areas of research, and inform his interpretations of the resulting data.

Scientific research and clinical practice may alter the psychologist's presuppositions, of course. Indeed, it would be surprising if they didn't, when new evidence warrants such a change. But it seems safe to say that, as a rule, one's basic belief system is not readily discarded or fundamentally disrupted. For it is what one assumes as true that gives meaning and coherence to his knowledge and activities. To paraphrase St. Augustine, one believes in order that one may then understand, and this seems to be true, regardless of what is actually believed.

Because they are regarded as scientists, psychologists may be more likely to be listened to these days than theologians. Trained

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<sup>4</sup>Rollo May, Psychology and the Human Dilemma (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1967), p. 90.

counselors, present in increasing numbers in American schools and colleges, may hear more "confessions" than pastors. Some church people and others may be upset by these trends, but their fears seem to be misplaced. The advent of therapists and counselors does not necessarily indicate a movement away from familiar views of man expressed in traditional religious terms. It means, rather, that such beliefs are now operating in different places, such as the psychological laboratory and the counselor's office. The real question is: what kind of belief system—which image of man—underlies the present work of the psychologist and counselor?

In an era of burgeoning technology, mass media of communication, and rapid population growth, when people must often pay to have someone listen to them, it seems certain that one of the critical issues of the day is the question of man. Is man made in the image of the machine, to be programmed for the sake of the economy or the state, and discarded when no longer useful? Or is man created a little lower than the angels, capable of some measure of self-determination, and not meant to be used as an object? Between these divergent positions there are various views of man, one of which is the focal point of this paper. For the way in which man deals with the past, lives in the present, and faces the future is shaped in no small measure by his conception of himself.

## II. THE LANGUAGE OF THE DISCUSSION

### The Philosophical Background

It is not possible to speak of "human nature" without recourse to

the terminology of philosophy. For instance, the word, nature, as just used, is a metaphysical term defined by abstracting certain human qualities that men are assumed to have in common. Or, again, a definition of "health" entails assumptions that may be called ontological, for they have to do with man's being.

A number of philosophical terms are used in this paper, and hopefully they will be defined sufficiently by the context in which they appear. For in a sense, the entire ensuing discussion is an examination of metaphysical and ontological terms, and of the underlying assumptions which give them meaning. The writer's intent is to suggest some possible meanings that are derived from a Christian view of man. And this is done to open up the discussion, not in the pretense of giving final answers.

The actual spelling out of a Christian doctrine of man is the task of theology, which, like philosophy, calls for the use of metaphysical and ontological terms. The theologian may choose from among a number of philosophical vocabularies to state his position. In this report, the theological framework is supplied primarily by the works of Paul Tillich, who relies heavily on the words and thought forms of modern existentialism. Tillich's existentialist leanings have given some new insights into the ancient faith of the Church. In addition, the language of existentialism which Tillich speaks is also used by a number of present day psychologists. While all existentialists do not agree with each other, their common concerns and frame of reference provide a means of comparing and contrasting some of the different views of man that are now being debated.

"Existentialism," writes Tillich, "is an analysis of the human predicament."<sup>5</sup> It is this focus upon the human condition that makes existentialism relevant to the theme of this report. The existentialist views of Tillich and of Rollo May in particular will be presented in some detail in the next three chapters.

#### Some Specific Terms to Be Defined

Any philosopher or theologian needs to define the terms that are important to him. The problems entailed in making these definitions often center around the fact that a given word has a history of its own, and may carry many connotations derived from its previous usage. A careful philosophical definition, then, may require a lengthy exposition that will be an attempt to say both what a given word means and what it doesn't mean. The alternative is to present a new word which may then be given a specific and particular definition.

This study does not offer any new words, or seek to redefine any old ones. However, a few of the key terms are considered at some length in the course of the discussion. The word, sin, for instance, is first used in the Prolegomena, and its significance is the main theme of Chapters II and III. Chapter IV is concerned with the definition of healing and health, in both a theological and psychological context. Since these terms are dealt with so extensively in the body of the paper, no preliminary discussion of them is necessary.

The human predicament is a term already introduced in this chapter.

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) II, 26.

Broadly speaking, it is a synonym for the human condition, which T. S. Eliot employs in The Cocktail Party, and which refers simply to the state of being human.

The word, predicament, is meant to imply, however, the ambiguities of human life. In the Biblical tradition, man's predicament is suggested in the creation story in Genesis, which reports that man is a creature of the dust, but is made in the image of God. Tillich suggests that the predicament is related to the contrasting conditions of human destiny and freedom. Rollo May, who writes of the human "dilemma," thinks of man's predicament in terms of knowing oneself as both subject and object at the same time. These complementary views of man's condition will be explored further in the discussion that follows.

#### T. S. Eliot and the Terminology of Psychiatry

The way in which T. S. Eliot deals with the human condition in The Cocktail Party is important to this study, because of the language he uses in order to get his message across. Celia's predicament is presented in terms of her "illness." She describes her "symptoms," and presents herself for "treatment," to a "doctor" who regards her as one of his "patients." In this way, Eliot accepts the familiar medical model of human psychic problems. The doctor-psychiatrist is portrayed as a powerful person, who makes a diagnosis, and then dispenses his prescriptions for treatment. The patient is seen as relatively helpless, and dependent upon the doctor's healing ministrations. In The Cocktail Party, Celia is presented as a patient who has come to Sir Henry's consulting room in the hope that he will make her whole.

Yet Celia's symptoms do not turn out to be ones that are associated with any disease in the usual sense. Celia and Sir Henry seem to speak about life in general, as it may come to anyone. Celia's symptoms refer to the condition of being human, as she has experienced this. And the treatment is not something that is done to Celia, but has to do with the way she accepts the human condition and tries to live with it.

Writing for a 20th century audience, Eliot uses terms that will be well known to his listeners, in an effort to convey something about life in a universal way. But the net effect of The Cocktail Party is to point out that the terminology of medical practice is inadequate to deal with the human condition. Indeed, the difficulties presented by such medical terms as "illness" and "health," especially in a psychological context, have been amply illustrated in recent years.<sup>6</sup>

It may be, as Maslow suggests, that the notion of "mental health" as a psychological concept cannot yet be discarded.<sup>7</sup> But if the psychologist is to be concerned with the full depth and breadth of human experience, he will require some basic assumptions about man that will make popular notions of mental health quite unsatisfactory. Hence, one of the objectives of this report is to offer alternatives to the medical model as a way of coming to terms with the human predicament.

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<sup>6</sup> E.g., see Thomas Szasz, "The Myth of Mental Illness," American Psychologist, 1960, 15, 113-118; Marie Johoda, Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958); or Abraham Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1962.)

<sup>7</sup> Maslow, op. cit., p. iii

### III. THE NATURE OF THE ASSUMPTIONS

A Christian view of man is derived from presuppositions that are admittedly of a religious nature. The presuppositions are matters of faith and belief; they are assumptions, not indisputable facts, and as such, are not subject to any absolute proof.

It may be debated whether there are any facts beyond dispute. Even science, states Carl Rogers, produces "only tentative beliefs, existing subjectively, in a number of different persons. If these beliefs are not tentative, then what exists is dogma, not science."<sup>8</sup>

To be sure, careful use of the scientific method enables people to hold many beliefs with a high degree of certainty. Moreover, states Rogers, science is the best means available for checking the "subject."<sup>9</sup> But science does not produce the hunches or the hypotheses; its function, rather, is to serve as a means of verifying, refining, altering, or rejecting the feelings, assumptions, and beliefs that already exist in the thought of the scientist.

The assumptions and preconceptions discussed in this paper, then, are what may be called "pre-scientific." They are based on the interpretation of limited knowledge, and have grown out of the viewpoints and beliefs of the men who hold such assumptions. It is the "conceptions of man which underlie empirical research" that are the focal point of this discussion. The need for a great deal more research in the best scientific tradition is to be taken for granted, when it

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<sup>8</sup>Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), p. 219.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

comes to the question of man.

Regardless of the specific content of the scientist's preconceptions of the nature of man, the presuppositions may logically be called "religious." This is merely to regard religion in a generic sense as that which constitutes any set of basic assumptions about life, whether or not there is an institutional expression of those beliefs. Christian preconceptions of man may thus be deemed comparable to other views of man, in that each statement of the nature of man rests upon the same kind of basic assumptions. Likewise, whatever the assumptions, they may lead to the formation of testable hypotheses that are the necessary prelude to scientific research.

A primary task of scientist and healer alike is to be aware, as far as possible, of the transcendental conceptions that give meaning and purpose to his work. Dogma is to be eschewed in favor of an open-mindedness that is better able to serve both the advancement of learning, and the understanding of those who seek to be healed. Still, it is the fundamental assumptions that are the alpha and omega of the psychologist and therapist, as they seek to organize their knowledge, develop their methods, and define their goals. The consideration of some preconceptions about the nature of man from a Christian point of view begins in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### SIN AND THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT

Sin is a familiar word that refers to the human predicament as it is understood in the context of a particular religious faith. The significance of sin will be discussed initially in terms of what it does and does not mean to T. S. Eliot. Following a brief look at what sin may signify in an existentialist frame of thought, sin and its existentialist synonym, estrangement, will be explored in its various theological dimensions, as suggested by the theology of Paul Tillich.

#### I. THE MEANING OF SIN

Celia Coplestone describes one of her "symptoms" to Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, and claims to be suffering from a sense of sin. The word, sin, seems somehow out of place in the consulting room of a psychiatrist. For though sin is not an unfamiliar term to most people in this culture, it seems unlikely that it would be discussed by a "patient" in the context of mental illness. After all, of what disease is Celia's sense of sin a symptom?

Sin is a theological term that belongs to and is defined by the Biblical tradition common to both Christians and Jews. It is mentioned, alluded to, and otherwise taken for granted in the Scriptures, and is an integral part of the Church's teachings. The Christian doctrine of Original Sin expresses the belief that all men are affected by sin. How man may deal with sin is tied in with the Christian concepts of atonement

and salvation, and is expressed in the corporate and sacramental life of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

It is not within the scope of this discussion, however, to present a history of the concept of sin and all its varied meanings. The focus here is upon the existential significance of sin, which is regarded as one way of understanding the human predicament.

It is interesting to speculate on the reaction of counselors and others to the word, sin, if it should be heard in their "consulting rooms" in real life. Presumably, the counselor would try to determine what sin may mean to his client, whether or not the counselor himself "believed" in sin.

If, in fact, the topic of sin seems out of place in the consulting room, one might wonder, as well, about the more ordinary language of the counseling interview. Clients often use psychological terms to describe their life situation, and the counselor may take these words for granted. But again, the counselor must try to determine what the client's terms mean to him. If "sin" suffers because it is a foreign word to the counselor, so may psychological terms suffer if they are taken for granted by the counselor.

The pastoral counselor may face the same problem in reverse. As any pastor knows, sin has a variety of meanings, including that which is peculiar to the individual counselee, which the pastor should try

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<sup>1</sup>For a general discussion of sin and its synonyms--trespass, iniquity, et al, see, Alan Richardson (ed.), A Theological Word Book of the Bible (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1957); or The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: Osford University Press, 1958).

to discover, if his parishioner uses the word.

The actual setting of the "consulting room" may tend to determine the client's choice of words. Obviously the counselor must try to hear what his client is saying, both through, and in spite of, the language he uses.

#### T. S. Eliot's View of Sin

What does sin mean to Celia Coplestone? Celia begins by saying that she does not refer to "sin in the ordinary sense," which, she supposes, is "being immoral.<sup>2</sup>" She adds that she has "never noticed that immorality was accompanied by a sense of sin." And she wonders if the people who are called immoral aren't rather those "who we say have no moral sense."

In so stating what she doesn't mean by sin, Celia suggests that sin is not simply being bad--that it is not just breaking the rules supplied by conventional morality. Undoubtedly the playwright is not satisfied with the well known teaching, often promulgated by the Church, that sin is defined by a series of "thou salt not's," and that sinners are those who either ignore or break the laws. Indeed, if such a notion of sin prevails, the Church is not being true to its larger concept of the human predicament, which sin describes.

The "sin equals immorality" idea is misleading on two counts. First, it implies that overcoming sin is simply a question of trying harder not to be immoral. Overcoming sin is reduced to a question of striving for and achieving moral perfection--a matter of knowing the moral law and

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<sup>2</sup>Eliot, op. cit., p. 361.

keeping it. It was for promoting this kind of religion that Jesus denounced the Pharisees. And it is this view that Celia rejects as she tries to describe her sense of sin to Sir Henry.

Secondly, the concept of sin as immorality fails to account for the radical nature of man's humanness. Celia speaks of this as she says how she actually feels about herself. She has experienced a sense of being alone--not just being by herself, but a realization that "one is always alone."<sup>3</sup> She realized her aloneness when she found that what she thought was a loving relationship between herself and a married man turned out to be a case of two "strangers" using each other for their own purposes. And she asks, "Are we all in fact unloving and unlovable? Then one is alone . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Celia talks on about what sin means to her. She doesn't understand why she feels "sinful," and adds,

It must be some kind of hallucination;  
Yet at the same time, I'm frightened by the fear  
That it is more real than anything I believe in.  
• • • • •

It's not the feeling of anything I've ever done,  
Which I might get away from, or of anything in me  
I could get rid of--but of emptiness, of failure  
Towards someone, or something, outside of myself;  
And I feel I must . . . atone--is that the word?<sup>5</sup>

Finally, Celia speaks of the "inconsolable memory" of something she has caught a glimpse of in her relationships with others. She refers to her vision of a kind of ecstatic and selfless "loving in the spirit," which is something she longs for, but has yet to find. Can it be found, she asks. And if it can't, she wonders, "Why do I feel guilty at not

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

having found it?<sup>6</sup>

In sum, Celia's sense of sin is associated with feelings of loneliness and of fear, a sense of emptiness and failure, the need to atone, and the awareness of guilt—not guilt from being immoral as such, but guilt resulting from the realization of having failed, somehow, to fulfill her vision of life. And she wonders what is wrong with her, and whether she can be "cured."

#### Sin as an Ontological Word

T. S. Eliot does not write, of course, as a theologian, but as a playwright putting words into the mouths of his characters. Yet the lines which Celia speaks offer an implicit theology of sin in her description of what may be called her predicament. Celia makes it clear that her sense of sin is not based on something she has done, but on her awareness of who she is, as a human being. It is in this light that sin may be seen as basically an ontological term, rather than as primarily a moral or ethical one. Sin has to do with the condition of man's being, as he stands before God, before others, and himself. Though Celia never refers to God directly, her sense of sin—her feeling of "failure towards someone, or something, outside of" herself—seems obviously to imply that sin describes the subjective awareness of how Celia is related to all that is—herself, others, and God—the very ground of her being.

In emphasizing the ontological dimensions of sin, T. S. Eliot gives Celia some additional lines that suggest why sin may have lost some of

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 363.

its original meaning. She states,

Well, my upbringing was pretty conventional--  
I had always been taught to disbelieve in sin.  
Oh, I don't mean that it was ever mentioned!  
But anything wrong, from our point of view,  
was either bad form, or was psychological.<sup>7</sup>

Being taught to "disbelieve in sin" does, indeed, seem "pretty conventional" in the present era. Although the philosophy of inevitable progress does not seem to prevail in the Western world as it once might have, there remain in Western thought elements of an idealism that still looks for the ultimate "triumph" of empirical science, and the perfectibility of man. The adherents of these views would hardly take sin seriously in its ontological sense, and hence, not in its moral sense, either. Sin is not believed in by those who deny that there is a fundamental human predicament.

Celia's "conventional" upbringing taught her the "anything wrong" was to be explained as either "bad form" or as "psychological." Bad form suggests, primarily, ignorance--of facts, customs, or of manners, perhaps. The implication is that bad form is correctable, or, at its worst, unavoidable, but that it is not a cause for any profound concern over man's predicament.

Undoubtedly it is the more serious human troubles that are "psychological." Such difficulties, harder to account for than bad form, are usually attributed to an adverse environment, or to what is called maladjustment, which two factors may represent the poles of a continuum on which psychological wrongs are placed. Popular thought holds that

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 361

if the environment can be improved, or if the individual can be re-adjusted to his surroundings, psychological problems can be ultimately resolved. The optimism underlying this view of man is apparent. There is no real predicament for man, it is said; there are merely psychological difficulties to be faced, and hopefully, overcome. Nor does this viewpoint acknowledge any basic moral dilemma, for man is not responsible for his troubles if they are psychological.<sup>3</sup>

It would seem that sin has no meaning for those who believe in what Celia calls "bad form" or "psychological". Sin loses both its ontological and moral significance for the person whose basic assumptions suggest that such things as ignorance, environmental influences, and maladjustment constitute the worst of the human condition. Celia speaks for many when she says that she was taught not to believe in sin. For sin is something that must be believed in, as part of one's transcendental concepts, or else it may be rightly ignored in favor of a different view of man.

Yet Celia finds herself rejecting her former beliefs in bad form and things psychological, for these concepts are no longer adequate to account for her experience. She suspects that there is something radically wrong with the world, and with herself--something for which she feels partly responsible. She is not sure whether she can be cured,

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<sup>3</sup>The question of responsibility is now being fought out, for instance, in the courts of law, wherein those accused of crimes may be judged innocent if a plea of insanity is upheld. But if, in fact, a defendant is guilty, though "insane," it is still a question of how the defendant's responsibility to himself and society may be discharged. The complexities of this issue go far beyond its legal implications.

and pleads for help as she wrestles with what she insists upon calling her sense of sin.

## II. AN EXISTENTIALIST VIEW OF SIN

As she discusses her sense of sin, Celia speaks in existential terms--the terms that come out of her own experiences. That is, she does not quote a textbook definition of sin, but cites what is happening to her, as she talks of sin. She seems to choose the term, sense of sin, to label the sum total of her reactions to, and her awareness of, who she is and what she has been through.

Celia's description of her predicament may be called an existential one, because of her subjective involvement in what she is saying about herself. As Paul Tillich has stated, "The opposite of existential is detached," and this hardly describes Celia, as she alludes to what her life looks and feels like in personal terms.

Tillich's illustration of the meaning of "existential" is clarified further as he explains,

In existential thinking, the object is involved. In non-existential thinking, the object is detached. By its very nature, theology is existential; by its very nature, science is non-existential. Philosophy unites elements of both.<sup>9</sup>

Existentialism is not so much a philosophical school as it is an attitude toward life. Existentialists agree in taking the human predicament seriously. Where they may disagree among themselves is in the approach they take to the questions which the human condition raises. That is, the existentialist may find his "answers" in the assumptions

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<sup>9</sup>Tillich, op. cit., p. 26.

and belief systems of atheism, or humanism, or of a particular religious tradition. Thus, for example, T. S. Eliot may be called a Christian existentialist, in that he presents Celia's predicament as real for her, and offers for her a Christian solution. And speaking as a theologian, Tillich acknowledges his debt to poets, novelists, artists, psychologists, and others, for providing an existential understanding of the human predicament.

For the Christian, T. S. Eliot's play is a fruitful starting point for consideration of the human predicament, because Eliot takes the human condition seriously, and presents it in terms of a familiar Biblical concept--sin. As Tillich has pointed out, if words such as "sin" and "judgment" have become meaningless, they

have lost not their truth but rather an expressive power which can be regained only if they are filled with the insights into human nature which existentialism (including depth psychology) has given to us.<sup>10</sup>

Certainly The Cocktail Party succeeds in restoring some of the profundity of meaning that rightly belongs to the notion of sin.

### Sin and Estrangement

Existentialists have offered various synonyms for what Celia calls her sense of sin. Estrangement is one of the most provocative of these--a term first used in a philosophical context by Hegel.<sup>11</sup> But Hegel's notion that man's estrangement is overcome by reconciliation in history has been unanimously rejected by existentialists. They have insisted that existence is estrangement, and estrangement points to the primary

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> See Tillich, op. cit., pp. 23-25.

fact of man's predicament.

Using this term in the context of Christian theology, Tillich discusses the meaning of estrangement at great length in Part III of his Systematic Theology. He sees the concept of estrangement as most helpful in understanding the human predicament. He states,

Man as he exists is not what he essentially is and ought to be. He is estranged from his true being. The profundity of the term 'estrangement' lies in the implication that one belongs essentially to that from which one is estranged. Man is not a stranger to his true being, for he belongs to it. He is judged by it but cannot be completely separated, even if he is hostile to it. Man's hostility to God proves indisputably that he belongs to him. Where there is the possibility of hate, there and there alone is the possibility of love.<sup>12</sup>

Though estrangement is not a Biblical term, Tillich believes that it is implied in the Biblical descriptions of man's predicament: in man's expulsion from paradise, in the hostility between man and nature, man and man, nation and nation. Sin may be understood as "the state of estrangement;" the concept of original sin points to the universal character of estrangement.<sup>13</sup> Tillich notes, however, that while estrangement implies an unchangeable and unavoidable "element of destiny" in man's predicament, sin preserves the "element of personal responsibility in one's estrangement."<sup>14</sup>

Tillich sums up the inter-relatedness of these terms as follows:

Man's predicament is estrangement, but his estrangement is sin. It is not a state of things, like the laws of nature, but a matter of both personal freedom and universal destiny.

It is not disobedience to a law which makes an act sinful, but the fact that it is an expression of man's estrangement from God, from men, from himself."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-47.

### III. THEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF ESTRANGEMENT

Unbelief. Tillich discusses various facets of estrangement that are related to the Christian concept of sin, and which amplify the nature of man's predicament. First is unbelief, a familiar synonym for sin, which points to man's deliberate turning away from the ground of his being (God), and which Tillich calls the "first mark of estrangement."<sup>16</sup> Further, "un-faith is ultimately identical with un-love." Unbelief and unlove imply that sin is a matter of man's relationship to God, from Whom men are estranged, but with Whom reunion is possible through that which can overcome estrangement, viz., faith and love (agape).

Hubris. Sin and estrangement are also seen in "self-elevation," which is Tillich's translation of the Greek hubris. (Pride is deemed an inadequate word for hubris.) Hubris is the other side of unbelief, and indicates man's efforts to put himself at the center of his world. "Its main symptom," writes Tillich, "is that man does not acknowledge his finitude."<sup>17</sup> Hubris may be seen in history whenever men think their partial truths are the whole truth, or identify their limited goodness with absolute goodness (as the Pharisees and their successors have done), or whenever men make idols out of their own creations. Hubris is man playing God, which man does individually but which may be expressed institutionally. Remarks Tillich, "No one is willing to acknowledge, in concrete terms, his finitude, his weakness and his errors, his ignorance and insecurity, his loneliness and anxiety."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

The expressions of sin as hubris are undoubtedly well known, and are especially familiar to those in the healing professions.

Concupiscence. Finally, Tillich speaks of estrangement as concupiscence, which is the desire of man to deal with his estrangement by trying to draw all of reality into himself, to be reunited with the whole from which he is separated. Concupiscence refers to physical hunger, sex, knowledge, power, wealth, and spiritual values—all of the things that men strive for and lust after.

In an extended exposition of concupiscence, Tillich freely draws upon the insights provided by existentialist elements in literature, philosophy, and psychology. He refers to Kierkegaard's analyses of the Emperor Nero and Don Juan, and to Goethe's Faust, as examples of personages consumed by concupiscence—the unlimited desire to control, to possess, or to know everything. Tillich suggests that Nietzsche's "will to power" and Freud's "libido" point to "expressions of concupiscence and estrangement." And he adds that these concepts of Nietzsche's and Freud's "have contributed immensely to a rediscovery of the Christian view of man's predicament."<sup>19</sup>

#### The Universality of Estrangement

So far in this discussion, sin has been presented primarily as it is felt and expressed within individuals, all of whom share the human predicament and live in estrangement from the ground of their being. But the universal dimension of estrangement must also be acknowledged in Christian theology, as Tillich reminds his readers. That is, all

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 53

of creation is estranged, and as a created being, the individual person cannot avoid the influences of his social and physical environment, which limit man's freedom, and share with him his destiny as finite being.<sup>20</sup> As Tillich puts it, "Biological, psychological and socio-logical powers are effective in every individual decision. The universe works through us as part of the universe."<sup>21</sup>

Illustrating this point, Tillich states that estrangement has been explained in deterministic terms: physically, by a mechanistic determinism; biologically, by theories of the decadence of the biological power of life; psychologically, as the compulsory force of the unconscious; sociologically, as the result of class domination; culturally, as the lack of educational adjustment. None of these explanations accounts for the feeling of personal responsibility that man has for his acts in the state of estrangement. But each of these theories contributes to an understanding of the element of destiny in the human predicament.<sup>22</sup>

Returning once more to Celia Coplestone, it may be noted that she refers to her awareness of the fact that the world shares in her predicament. She tells Sir Henry,

. . . I should really like to think there's something wrong with me--

Because, if there isn't, then there's something wrong,  
Or at least, very different from what it seemed to be,  
With the world itself--and that's much more frightening!  
That would be terrible. . . .<sup>23</sup>

It is "frightening" and  
"terrible" to realize that something is wrong with the world--something

<sup>20</sup> Classical Christian theology thus speaks of the Fall of nature as well as the Fall of man.

<sup>21</sup> Tillich, op. cit., p. 42.    <sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 56-7

<sup>23</sup> Eliot, op. cit., p. 359

which Celia can do nothing about. "So I'd rather believe," concludes Celia, "there is something wrong with me, that could be put right." She then proceeds to focus upon doing something about herself, rather than attacking the world over which she has little or no control. The Christian would add that only as one comes to terms with his own estrangement can he "overcome the world."

#### IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Existentialists in general acknowledge what is called the human predicament. This concept refers to the condition of man in his finitude, his creatureliness, his contingency. The religious term, sin, takes into account man's predicament, and his partial responsibility for it as a creature who may exercise his freedom even in the face of the elements of destiny. Man is estranged—not separated—from his essential being, which Christians call the image of God in which man is created.

The universality of estrangement is seen in the forces which condition man's freedom.<sup>24</sup> Yet man is never totally determined by the so-called elements of destiny, for man alone of all creatures knows that he has a predicament which he may accept as his own, and which he may respond to as one who is responsible. It is the awareness of personal responsibility for her own predicament that enables a person such as Celia Coplestone to speak of her sense of sin.

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<sup>24</sup>St. Paul speaks of sin itself as one of the determining factors in life: "But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me." See Romans 7:13-23.

Like other transcendental concepts, sin may not be directly proven or demonstrated. Celia rightly suggests that one is free to believe or to disbelieve in sin. But for the Christian, sin is an indispensable term, for while it refers to man's predicament, it anticipates also the resolution of that predicament. "The language about sin is for the Christian a language concerning a problem solved," theologian Paul Van Buren has written.<sup>25</sup> This is the language of faith for those who see Jesus the Christ as the One Who overcomes man's sin and estrangement.

Continues Van Buren,

The unbeliever may speak of human fear, anxiety, and bondage, but since these conditions are measured against some other norm than Jesus of Nazareth, and since he does not speak of this problem as one who has been liberated by the contagion of Jesus' freedom, he will speak in another way.<sup>26</sup>

Some of the other ways of speaking about the human predicament in psychological terms will be discussed in the following chapter, while in Chapter IV shall be examined the meaning of Jesus as the Man perceived by Christians as the measure of all men.

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<sup>25</sup>Paul Van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 179.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 179-80.

## CHAPTER III

### 'THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TERMS

To speak of sin and the human predicament is to deal with the human condition in metaphysical or theological terms, the terms that one must use to state his transcendental concepts. But if such concepts grow out of the raw data of life, they need always to be related back to the concrete experience of human beings. This is one of the tasks of psychology, as a branch of science concerned with the study of the human condition. Some of the ways in which the concept of the human predicament may be spelled out in psychological terms are discussed in this chapter.

#### I. SIN IN THE CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGY

A word such as sin is at a higher level of abstraction than the terminology of psychology and the social sciences. Strictly speaking, it is probably not possible to define sin in psychological terms. But the psychologist who takes sin seriously can bring the insights of his basic assumptions to bear upon the psychological theories and the empirical data at hand. He may also attempt to formulate constructs and hypotheses that may give expression to the underlying notion of sin, and allow them to be tested in the psychological laboratory and in the counselor's consulting room.

The significance of the concept of sin (or estrangement) for the psychologist, and for the social scientist in general, lies in its

bi-polar approach to the question of the nature of man. Sin points toward both universal destiny and individual freedom. Sin refers to the bondage of man to forces beyond his control, but at the same time acknowledges his actual, though conditional, responsibility for himself. Theories which over-emphasize either man's helplessness or his freedom do not do justice to the notion of sin.

#### Psychological Determinism and Human Destiny

Psychoanalytical Psychology. Various psychologists in recent years have invited or even forced the church to re-examine its concept of sin. The work of Sigmund Freud, for instance, rather contradicted the philosophy of inevitable progress, the exaltation of reason, and the psychologies of consciousness that prevailed in the latter 19th century. Freud's theories of the unconscious and of basic psycho-biological drives have served as a needed corrective to the emphasis on man's freedom, and as a reminder of the determining elements that exist within the human species. Whatever the ultimate judgment of history may be upon Freud's efforts as a whole, he has clearly suggested that man's destiny may be partially shaped within his own psyche.

Behaviorism. Psychologies falling under the heading of behaviorism also present views that imply a deterministic outlook on life. Man's susceptibility to factors that condition his behavior and his world view appears to have been amply demonstrated by the behaviorists.

Gordon Allport has pointed out that behaviorism in general falls within the philosophical tradition of John Locke, wherein Locke and his successors see the human mind as passively responding to external

stimuli.<sup>1</sup> Behaviorism, despite its various modifications, stresses what happens to the organism from the outside, and in this sense is deterministic.

The same may be said for environmentalism, which stresses the influence of the family, the culture, or social, economic, political and historical factors, as those elements which tend to determine the shape of an individual's life. Allport opines that Lockean empiricism is attractive to those who undertake the scientific study of man, for it is so much easier to be "objective" about events that are visible and external than it is about what is hidden in the human mind.

The Christian need not be anti-Freudian or anti-behaviorist, however, even if he rejects the deterministic tendencies that may underlie these two psychological viewpoints. The psychologist who takes estrangement seriously may accept the findings of Freud and the behaviorists as helpful in understanding the human predicament. Freud's theories of instinctual drives, defense mechanisms, the workings of the unconscious, and so on, may well express truths about the human animal, and so may the learning theories of behaviorists and environmentalists. These viewpoints may be regarded as tentative statements of partial truths concerning the human condition.

Yet no matter how "scientific" dynamic or behavioristic psychology may become, the Christian cannot regard such knowledge as the whole and final truth about the human predicament. For those factors which tend to determine man's existence--the so-called elements of destiny--must

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon Allport, Beconing (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 7ff.

be considered along side other factors that may account for man's individuality, his freedom and responsibility--his sense of sin.

#### "Third Force" Psychologies and the Conditions of Freedom

"The two comprehensive theories of human nature most influencing psychology until recently have been the Freudian and the experimental-positivistic-behavioristic."<sup>2</sup> So states Abraham Maslow, who feels that there is now emerging "a third, increasingly comprehensive theory of human nature" embodied in what he calls a "Third Force" in psychology.<sup>3</sup> The Third Force is not an organized psychological school as such, and it is represented by a variety of viewpoints. Nor is the Third Force necessarily opposed to its Freudian and behavioristic heritage. "Our job," Maslow says of psychologists, "is to integrate these various truths into the whole truth, which should be our only loyalty."<sup>4</sup> Maslow sees the Third Force group as going beyond the psychologies of the past in an effort to discover the larger truths about man.

If the concept of the human predicament as here defined is accepted by psychologists, it would seem that psychology must be concerned not only with the ways in which man tends to be determined, but also with

<sup>2</sup>Abraham Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1962), p. vi.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Maslow suggests that the Third Force group includes Adlerians, Rankians, Jungians, neo-Freudians, and post-Freudians, (including ego-psychologists and others). He also lists personality psychologists such as Gordon Allport, Murray, Moreno, and Murphy; existential psychologists, Self-psychologists, Rogerians, and so on.

Maslow's long bibliography purports to cover "a sampling of writings by the 'Third Force' group," pp. 206-214

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. iv.

the ways in which he realizes his freedom. And if psychoanalytic and behavioristic psychologies may be regarded as emphasizing man in the face of destiny, so may the Third Force be regarded as focussing upon man as he actualizes himself under the conditions of freedom. To be sure, it is matters of emphasis and not absolute differences that are being discussed here. But the provocative insights of various Third Force psychologists warrant some consideration of their views in connection with this examination of the human predicament in psychological terms.

A Psychology of Sin--O. Hobart Mowrer. O. Hobart Mowrer is one psychologist who discusses sin as such, in the context of psychology and mental health. He rejects the heavy emphasis of Freud and the behaviorists on the biological determinants of behavior, and suggests that the human mind or psyche is not merely an organ to serve the body, but that it has a life of its own—"its own special conditions for survival."<sup>5</sup> Mowrer concludes that "religious precepts and practices . . . have grown up largely in response to man's unique needs." And he states that "sin" is a better word than "sickness" as a term to describe man's psychic problems. For unlike sickness, sin implies moral responsibility, and carries "a vision of new potentialities," and "the possibility of radical redemption ('recovery')."<sup>6</sup>

According to Mowrer, so-called mental illness results, not from

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<sup>5</sup>O. Hobart Mowrer, The Crisis in Religion and Psychiatry (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1961), p. 16. Italics in the original.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. iv.

repressed feelings, but from behavior that violates one's conscience. The conscience is shaped by relationships with significant others, which includes parents, friends, and the wider social community. Emotional difficulties and genuine guilt result from actual misdeeds. The real problem is sin, which stems from the repression of the conscience rather than the repression of instinctual drives.<sup>7</sup>

In his free-swinging attack on traditional psychoanalysis and the "myth of mental illness," Mowrer emphasizes the reality of guilt and sin, and the importance of accepting responsibility for one's own psychic difficulties. He suggests that the disturbed person may be "cured" by confession and expiation--by admitting his secret sins and trying to atone for them. And he calls upon churches and their clergy to stop toying with Freud and to re-emphasize confession and penance as the means of helping people to a fuller, more satisfying kind of life.<sup>8</sup>

Mowrer's arguments are, to say the least, provocative. In underscoring the tendency of both therapists and clients to psychologize human problems, Mowrer rightly suggests that the notions of man's responsibility and culpability have been neglected, to the detriment of man himself. In using the concept of sin, Mowrer suggests the legitimate place of values in psychotherapy, for clients are seen to be wrestling with moral problems, and not merely with psychological

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<sup>7</sup>See also Donald F. Krill, "Psychoanalysts, Mowrer, and the Existentialists," Pastoral Psychology (October 1965), pp. 27-36.

<sup>8</sup>Mowrer, op. cit., especially Chapters 6 through 8. See as well Mowrer, The New Group Therapy (Princeton, N. J.: Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), Chapters 1, 4, 6, and 7.

"kinks." Thus Mowrer calls for a new rapprochement between psychology and religion, which may find as a common meeting ground their related views of the problems of guilt-ridden men.

Yet Mowrer's emphasis on sin as a moral problem appears to overlook the larger dimensions of the human predicament. His solution to the problem of sin is "a clearer knowledge of principles, which we can learn to obey and thereby live abundantly . . ."<sup>9</sup> By making sin synonymous with wrong-doing, Mowrer supports a theology of good works, not unlike the Pharisees. He fails to see sin in the sense of estrangement, and underestimates the elements of destiny in man's condition--the cultural and historical factors which condition one's sense of right and wrong, and the psycho-biological dimensions of man's nature. In his zeal to criticize Freud, Mowrer, in effect, downgrades the power of the unconscious over man's behavior, and makes sin primarily a matter of conscious choice.

For Mowrer, "Sin" becomes "sins"--specific acts that are morally wrong, rather than the state of estrangement. One may, in fact, regard Mowrer's limited view of sin as a familiar attempt to make the human predicament a problem of manageable proportions by indicating an easy "way out." Mowrer may be commended for stressing man's responsibility for his actions, the need for confession and expiation, and all that this implies in human relationships. But he overlooks the problems of man's existential anxiety, his awareness of the contingencies of life, the elements of destiny that man is heir to, and

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<sup>9</sup>Mowrer, The Crisis in Religion and Psychiatry, pp. 182-3.

the efforts men make to deal with estrangement on their own terms. Sin, in short, is too small a problem for Hobart Mowrer.

Self-Concealment--Sidney Jourard. In a book called The Transparent Self, psychologist Sidney Jourard is concerned with particular aspects of the human predicament. He speaks of "resistance to being, to being oneself" in the face of another person, and he discusses at some length the tendency of men not to disclose themselves fully to each other.<sup>10</sup> Though Jourard does not mention sin as such, his concern for human self-disclosure is not unrelated to the confession of sins that is called for by Mowrer, who cites Jourard on this very point.<sup>11</sup>

"Self-concealment," writes Jourard, "is regarded as the most natural state for grown men."<sup>12</sup> As he elaborates on this "natural" phenomenon and points out its effects on human well-being, he reminds this writer of the immediate outcome of Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden.<sup>13</sup> Their eyes were opened and they "knew that they were naked," and covered themselves with aprons of fig leaves. Then Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of God. The Lord asked how they knew they were naked, and inquired whether they had eaten the forbidden fruit. In response, Adam blamed Eve for his actions, and Eve in turn said, "The serpent beguiled me."

<sup>10</sup> Sidney Jourard, The Transparent Self (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), p. 10

<sup>11</sup> Mowrer, The New Group Therapy, pp. 237-8.

<sup>12</sup> Jourard, op. cit., p. iii

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 3.

Here in this ancient myth are expressed truths that seem most relevant to human psychology. Man is tempted to actualize his freedom—by deciding for himself what he should and should not do. But he does not face up to what he has done, and hides from his fellow man, from God, and from himself. He cannot admit that what he has done has resulted from his own decision, and refuses to accept responsibility for his deed.

It is undoubtedly this "natural" state of man that Jourard calls self-concealment, in which may be seen the evidence of sin, or estrangement. Man does not trust God, he is not open to his fellow man, he is not true to himself. This is self-concealment, and it is one of the marks of estrangement.

Jourard, of course, is hardly the only psychologist concerned with the human tendency to hide from others and from oneself. Counselors and therapists of whatever school, in one way or another, indicate the importance of the client's talking freely about his problems, and thus facing himself and others. But Jourard's concentration on both the physiological and psychological effects of self-concealment provides a clear and salient picture of this aspect of the human predicament. His notions on the relation of "transparency" to health will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Person or Personage—Jourard and Paul Tournier. One of the elements of destiny that seems bound to affect human beings to some degree is the role that one is called on to play in life. The role is usually socially determined, but it may also be self-determined. Jourard points out that roles are required because "no social system can use all of every man's

self, and yet keep the social system functioning well.<sup>14</sup> Role-definitions help people "learn just which actions they must perform, and which they must suppress" so that the social system may function properly.<sup>15</sup> Jourard examines sexual, occupational, and familial roles, as common examples.

In a similar vein, psychiatrist Paul Tournier looks at what he calls the "personage," a term referring to the role of a character in a stage play. Tournier states that "we are the slaves of the personage which we have invented for ourselves or which has been imposed on us by others."<sup>16</sup> A man's whole life may be seen in terms of the games or roles he plays in order to do what is expected of him, and to achieve acceptance, recognition, approval, and a sense of security.

Both Jourard and Tournier point out that roles are unavoidable. But they suggest that the role or personage, like the mask of the actor, is something that the person can hide behind. Even though necessary, the role tends to depersonalize the player, to limit his freedom, to turn a human being into a machine that is programmed by his role. It is no coincidence that in this age of the machine and of highly specialized roles, many psychologists and others are showing an increased concern over the problems of depersonalization in an ever more complex society.

The very necessity of roles in human society makes it one of man's determining factors, and one mark of his estrangement from himself and others. The psychologist's understanding of the effects of role playing

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<sup>14</sup> Jourard, op. cit., p. 54.    <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Tournier, The Meaning of Persons (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 32.

on the human psyche gives the theologian further illustration of the human predicament. For man in his limited freedom must choose his role, even though he will be determined by it in various ways. And the human predicament may be seen in the question, how can man be a person and a personage at the same time?

Motivation and Needs--Abraham Maslow. Another aspect of the human condition that is relevant to the work of psychologists is seen in the problem of human motivation and needs. Man's needs and desires, whether subjectively felt or objectively studied, form an area of major concern in his life. And to the extent that human needs and motivations can be defined and understood, they may be viewed both as determining forces and as conditions for the actualization of human freedom.

Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation is singled out here because it is relatively recent in its formulation, and because it seems promising of further expansion and refinement. Moreover, Maslow's "holistic-dynamic" approach to personality theory leads him to raise the question of motivation in terms of how it functions for the human being as a whole. "The study of motivation," says Maslow, "must be in part the study of the ultimate human goals or desires or needs."<sup>17</sup> Motivation has both conscious and unconscious aspects, and is related to perceptual and cognitive processes, to human values, to social and cultural influences, and to human health and abnormality, according to Maslow.

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<sup>17</sup> Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 66.

Maslow posits what he calls a "hierarchy of basic needs."<sup>18</sup> Most basic are the physiological needs--hunger, rest, sex, and so on. Then, proceeding to the "higher" needs, come, in order, the needs for safety, for belongingness and love, for esteem, and for self-actualization. Finally, there are the desires to know and understand, and the aesthetic needs.

In general, Maslow suggests, a person does not act on a higher need unless those lower in the hierarchy are more or less satisfied. Only when one's hunger is assuaged is he "free" to concern himself more fully with his desires for security and safety; the person preoccupied with a need for love may devote little attention to a need for esteem or self-actualization. But as Maslow repeatedly points out, the order of these hypothesized needs is not fixed, and there are other determinants of behavior besides needs and desires. And often one's activities are designed to satisfy several needs at once, such as one's occupation, which may be related to any and all of the basic needs.

Maslow further postulates that the frustration of the basic needs may be a primary cause of socio-pathic behavior or mental illness. But he is more interested in the role of need gratification and the development of "healthy" personality. His notions of health and self-actualization will be examined further in the fourth section of this paper.

In the context of this discussion of the human predicament, it is interesting to note that Maslow suggests that his postulated basic

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Chapter 5.

needs are instinctoid in nature. "Our main hypothesis," he writes, "is that human urges or basic needs alone may be innately given to at least some appreciable degree."<sup>19</sup> His cautious language here stems from his wish to avoid the wide dichotomy that in the past has often separated instinctivists and environmentalists. He opines that man is partially determined by hereditary needs (though they are intrinsically directionless, unlike animal instincts), and partially determined by the environment, as well. Maslow thus chooses a middle ground in the long-standing debate over heredity "versus" environment.

Maslow's theories are of interest here because he allows room for the human predicament in his hypotheses. He recognizes the influence of various human needs and of man's environment, but suggests that none of these is all-determining of human behavior. Indeed, writes, Maslow, man's need for self-actualization and growth is also instinctoid--part of man's "essential inner nature."<sup>20</sup>

In Maslow's terms, then, the human predicament may be seen in the fact that man faces conflicting inner needs and external forces with which he must somehow come to terms. Both hereditary factors and the environment are beyond man's complete control, and appear as elements of destiny. Therefore, the human "need for self-actualization" must be fulfilled in the face of the environmental and biological determinants that condition the exercise of human freedom.

It goes without saying perhaps, that scientists in other fields

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>20</sup> Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 178. In this later volume, Maslow concentrates on the question of self-actualization and the meaning of psychological health.

of study may provide valuable information and understanding concerning the natural and social environments in which man lives. The human predicament, in other words, is more than a matter of psychological concern. But since it centers in the human being, the logical point at which to focus the study of the human condition seems to be that branch of science known as psychology.

## II. PSYCHOLOGY IN SEARCH OF AN ONTOLOGY

In this brief discussion of the human predicament in psychological terms, it is apparent that one may look at the work of a variety of psychologists, and find fragments of the truth about the human condition in a number psychological theories and schools. What one calls the truth depends, of course, on one's fundamental assumptions or faith or Weltanschauung. And as this paper may illustrate, it is no simple matter to apply directly the perspective of one's transcendental concepts, such as a Christian view of man, to the vast arena of human life and experience. Or perhaps it is more helpful to say that psychology, as one of the life sciences, has yet to produce a unified body of knowledge, because psychologists do not agree on what their basic assumptions might be. There appears to be no immediate prospect of changing this situation, and psychologists may be expected to continue to study man from the standpoint of their various world views.

There are, however, a number of psychologists who are concerned about enlarging the traditional perspectives of psychology, and who wish to understand man in all his biological, social, and historical complexity. Maslow, for instance, looks for a "psychology of being,"

and suggests that psychology must begin with an underlying ontology.<sup>21</sup> Gordon Allport has long called for a psychology that is both idiographic and nomothetic in its approach to the study of man. A "broadened psychology," writes Allport, will take into account both human individuality and general laws of human behavior, and see both as necessary for an understanding of man.<sup>22</sup> Other "Third Force" psychologists have similarly indicated their dissatisfaction with psychologies that present a view of man that is too narrow, too "scientific," too restricted by the underlying assumptions that form the starting points.

#### An Existentialist Approach to Psychology

Maslow believes that "the existentialists may supply psychology with the underlying philosophy which it now lacks."<sup>23</sup> If the basic philosophical questions are re-opened for discussion, states Maslow, "perhaps psychologists will stop relying on pseudo-solutions or on the unconscious, unexamined philosophies they picked up as children." Maslow thus echoes Rollo May's call for psychologists continually to analyze and clarify their own presuppositions.

It is Rollo May, more than anyone else in this country, who has championed the existentialist approach to psychology. The two pertinent volumes which May has edited, and to which he is a major contributor, are

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup>Gordon Allport, Personality, A Psychological Interpretation, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937, pp. 22-3).

<sup>23</sup>Maslow, op. cit., p. 10.

Existence, A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology,<sup>24</sup> and Existential Psychology,<sup>25</sup> which were published in 1958 and 1960, respectively. May's existentialist viewpoint is implicit in his other works, including his latest book, Psychology and the Human Dilemma.<sup>26</sup>

As Tillich has stated, "existential" is the opposite of "detached."<sup>27</sup> It is the false sense of detachment or of scientific objectivity that Rollo May calls into question when he pleads for psychologists to be aware of their basic assumptions. For, as many psychologists are beginning to realize, their transcendental concepts of man cannot but affect their hypotheses, and the interpretation of data resulting from their attempts to test those hypotheses. May cites some recent research by Robert Rosenthal at Harvard which demonstrated how "experimenter bias" affects even the performance of rats in a maze.<sup>28</sup> The point is that no scientist can completely divorce himself from what he is looking at. There is a "subject-object polarity," but not a separate subject and object, even in the scientific laboratory.<sup>29</sup> And as a therapist, May has come to feel that "every psychotherapist is existential to the extent that he is a good therapist, i.e., that he is able to grasp the

<sup>24</sup>Rollo May, Ernest Angel, & Henri Ellenberger (eds.), Existence, A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958). Hereinafter referred to as Existence.

<sup>25</sup>Rollo May (ed.), Existential Psychology (New York: Randon House, 1961).

<sup>26</sup>Rollo May, Psychology and the Human Dilemma (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1967).

<sup>27</sup>See above, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup>May, op. cit., p. 21.    <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 10

patient in his reality" and to become involved in that reality.<sup>30</sup>

### The Quest for a Scientific Psychology

May is well aware that the existential approach, either in the laboratory or in the consulting room, sounds unscientific, for science, by its very nature, is objective and non-existential. But May insists that "the existential movement in psychiatry and psychology arose precisely out of a passion to be not less but more empirical."<sup>31</sup> He calls upon psychologists to remove the blinders of their traditional preconceptions, which seem to limit their view of man. And he states what may be called the existentialist's credo, as follows:

There is no such thing as truth or reality for a living human being except as he participates in it, is conscious of it, has some relationship to it.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, nomothetic science is concerned to discover general laws and to define "essences." In philosophical terms, science is "essentialist" as opposed to "existentialist." May admits that essences cannot be ruled out of science, but adds that "you cannot adequately describe or understand a living human being . . . on an 'essentialist' basis."<sup>33</sup>

May goes on to say that neither laws of human nature nor therapeutic techniques per se, no matter how sophisticated, will heal the anxious and suffering person in the therapist's office. It is the therapist's commitment to his client as he actually exists, and the

<sup>30</sup> May, Existential Psychology, p. 19.

<sup>31</sup> May, Existence, p. 8. Italics in original.

<sup>32</sup> May, Existential Psychology, p. 17.      <sup>33</sup> Ibid.

interaction between these two persons, that allows the possibility of healing to occur. It is the therapist's involvement with the patient, and what they experience together, that enables the therapist to see the world as his client sees it, and thus come to know him as an individual. Scientific principles provide only limited knowledge of each separate person.

Existential psychology offers, not a new method, but a different attitude toward man, and toward the study of man. The existentialist believes that man is more than a tabula rasa, for man is the creature who attributes meaning to what he perceives and experiences. Each man, in a sense, makes his own world, as he decides what is significant and meaningful for him. Though man recognizes his finiteness and is aware of his destiny, he exercises his freedom in that he decides in what ways he shall come to terms with the determining elements in his life.

And as a man shapes his world and chooses his world view, so does he fashion his own self.<sup>34</sup> In The Cocktail Party, Sir Henry perceives the truth of man's self-definition, and he answers Celia's question concerning whether she is "normal" or not by saying, "We must find out about you, before we decide/what is normality."<sup>35</sup> Each person has his own hopes, his own potentialities and limitations, his own thrust toward self-actualization. Any nomothetic definition of man is somewhat culturally determined, and can be applied to individuals only

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<sup>34</sup>Cf. George Kelly's two volume work, The Psychology of Personal Constructs (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1955), in which Kelly builds a theory of personality based on the proposition that a person's constructs actually shape his world and his own self.

<sup>35</sup>Eliot, op. cit., p. 359

with endless qualification. The person who seeks to be merely like other people may himself be unhappy, stunted, and lacking in a sense of his own self.<sup>36</sup>

The existential psychologist strives to understand man in terms of his being, and to grasp him in ontological terms. As Maslow has put it, existentialism

deals radically with that human predicament presented by the gap between human aspirations and human limitations (between what a human being is, what he would like to be, and what he could be). . . A person is both actuality and potentiality.<sup>37</sup>

#### An Existentialist View of Being

In Chapter II of Existence, Rollo May discusses the existentialist view of the human predicament at some length. First he tackles the question of being and its concomitant, non-being, and the ontological anxiety that a person knows as he faces the contingency of his existence. He points out that in the phrase, human being, being is a principle, and this implies being something.<sup>38</sup> Since men exist in time, being also entails becoming--the realizing of potentials which takes place now in the future. Ontological guilt arises as the result of a person's awareness that he/has not fulfilled his potentialities--that he has not been true to his essential self. Celia Coplestone refers to this when she mentions "a craving for something I cannot find/And the shame of never finding it."<sup>39</sup> The human predicament may thus be

<sup>36</sup>E.g., see Jourard, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>37</sup>Maslow, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>38</sup>May, Existence, p. 41.    <sup>39</sup>Eliot, op. cit., p. 363.

described as man knowing he is responsible for his own being or becoming in the face of his destiny, which, in ontological terms, entails the threat of non-being.

May enlarges on the question of being as he describes "three nodes of world" that characterize human existence.<sup>40</sup> First is Umwelt, "the biological world, generally called the environment." Second, there is the Mitwelt, the world of man's relationships with his fellow men. Finally, there is Eigenwelt, the "node of relationship to one's self."

Umwelt, the material world, is simply given, and is the world of "finiteness and biological determinism." May refers to Ludwig Binswanger's comments to the effect that Freud's great contribution to psychology was in the area of "man in relation to nature (Umwelt)--drives, instincts, and similar aspects of experience."<sup>41</sup> But Binswanger felt that Freud showed little "understanding of man in relation to his fellow men (Mitwelt) and that the area of man in relation to himself (Eigenwelt) was omitted entirely" in Freud's work.<sup>42</sup>

A great deal of what is usually called psychology is concerned with the Umwelt--what it is, and how man "adapts" or "adjusts" to it. May insists, however, that the existential analysts take Umwelt seriously, "with greater reality than those who segment it into 'drives' and 'substances,' because they are not limited to Umwelt alone, but see

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<sup>40</sup> May, op. cit., pp. 61ff.

<sup>41</sup> May, Existential Psychology, p. 32.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. The quote is from May's paraphrasing of a paper written by Binswanger.

it also in the context of human self-awareness."<sup>43</sup> Umwelt is not the only mode of existence, and hence it is "an over-simplification and radical error" to try to force all of human experience to fit the categories of Umwelt. "In this connection," May concludes, "the existential analysts are more empirical, that is, more respectful of actual human phenomena, than the mechanists or positivists."<sup>44</sup>

Mitwelt has to do, not simply with social determinants, but with the world of inter-relationships of persons. If another person is regarded merely as "needed" or "useful" or the object of libidinal drives, he is being treated as an object--as part of the Umwelt. Mitwelt, on the other hand, is the world of the relationships of people to each other as persons. This involves mutual awareness, personal decision, commitment to the other person, and the "structure of meaning which is designed by the inter-relationship of the persons in it."<sup>45</sup> May suggests that Martin Buber's "I and Thou" philosophy has "developed implications of Mitwelt."<sup>46</sup> The essence of relationship is that both persons are "mutually affected by the encounter," May states.

Eigenwelt, or "own world," presupposes "self-awareness, self-relatedness, and is uniquely present in human beings."<sup>47</sup> It is "not merely a subjective, inner experience; it is rather the basis on which we see the real world in its true perspective, the basis on which we relate." To use May's illustration, if a person says a flower is

<sup>43</sup>May, Existence, pp. 61-2.    <sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 62.    <sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>See Martin Buber, I and Thou (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

<sup>47</sup>May, Existence, p. 63.

beautiful, he is not describing a flower in a purely objective way, but inferring that the flower is beautiful for him. In this way, May underlines the dichotomy in Western thought between subject and object, and reiterates the existentialist notion that truth or reality exists for a person only as he relates himself to it and participates in it. The omission of Eigenwelt "has much to do with the fact that modern people tend to lose the sense of reality of their own experiences."<sup>48</sup> The question of relationship to oneself (Eigenwelt) is the node of world least adequately dealt with by contemporary psychology.

May points out that the three nodes of world are "always inter-related and always condition each other," for they are "three simultaneous modes of being-in-the-world."<sup>49</sup> He adds that the reality of one's existence is lost if "one of these nodes is emphasized to the exclusion of the other two."<sup>50</sup>

#### Rollo May's Concept of the Human Dilemma

In a recent book, May speaks specifically of what he calls the human dilemma in a frame of reference similar to that of the nodes of world. He posits that "the human dilemma is that which arises out of man's capacity to experience himself as both subject and object at the same time. Both are necessary . . ."<sup>51</sup>

Man knows himself as an object, as part of the world that is created, contingent, determined (Umwelt). But at the same time he is

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.    <sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid. Italics in original

<sup>51</sup>May, Psychology and the Human Dilemma, p. 3.

aware that he is a subject--one on whom certain forces are acting, and one who is doing the experiencing. Man's ability to see himself as both object and subject, continues May, "is very close to what is often termed 'self-relatedness.'" Self-relatedness "implies the capacity to relate to other selves (Mitwelt) as well as to one's own self" (Eigenwelt).<sup>52</sup> And man's dilemma may be seen in that he cannot be pure subject, but if he pretends to be pure object, he becomes unrelated to his experiences, and something less than a human being.

May alludes to Tillich's notion of man's "finite freedom" as descriptive of the human dilemma. He paraphrases Tillich and states that

man is finite in the respects that he is subject to death, illness, limitations of intelligence, perception, experience, and other deterministic forces ad infinitum. But at the same time man has freedom to relate to these forces; he can be aware of them, give them meaning, and select and throw his weight in favor of this or that force operating upon him.<sup>53</sup>

### III. THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT AND A PSYCHOLOGY OF BEING

Rollo May's reference to Tillich suggests that this discussion of the human predicament in psychological terms has returned to its starting point. By citing the work of various psychologists, there have been found several ways of describing the human dilemma so that both destiny and freedom are acknowledged. Some psychologists, such as Mowrer and Tournier, take "sin" for granted, and try to incorporate this concept into their respective theories. Jourard and others illustrate the significance of self-concealment, and show how it may be regarded as

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

a mark of estrangement. Jourard and Tournier consider the determining effects of a person's role in life, and ask how a man can be a person in his own right and a personage at the same time. Maslow theorizes that man is partially determined by his inherent nature and partially by his environment, but suggests that one of man's basic needs is to actualize himself according to his own self-chosen determinants. And Rollo May, expressing his existentialist viewpoint, acknowledges the human predicament in terms of man's knowing himself as both subject and object at the same time.

Each of these several points of view takes into account, in varying ways, the factors that limit or determine man's existence, and at the same time allows a measure of human freedom and self-determination. Yet it is apparent that it is not easy to describe the human predicament in psychological terms. The data and the vision of psychologists are hardly unequivocal, and are richly varied in their description of the human species. Psychologists are a long way from speaking with one voice regarding man. And this is hardly surprising, for psychology is a young science, and one in which the spirit of controversy may be expected to prevail for years to come. Perhaps the worst thing that could happen to psychology is that its practitioners might pretend too soon to have the truth they are still looking for.

Almost all of the Third Force psychologists referred to in this paper cite the work of Paul Tillich in one context or another. This does not necessarily indicate complete agreement with Tillich, but does suggest that psychologists' transcendental concepts may be stated or argued in theological terms. Though this in itself is nothing new,

there does appear to be an increased awareness by many psychologists of the fundamental importance of the basic assumptions that must underlie the study of man. In many respects, psychology seems to be searching for an ontology that will provide coherence for its view of man. There are others besides Abraham Maslow who are working "toward a psychology of being."

The words of Gordon Allport may aptly provide the conclusion for this chapter entitled, "The Human Predicament in Psychological Terms." Allport writes:

The goal of psychology is to reduce discord among our philosophies of man, and to establish a scale of probable truth, so that we may feel increasingly certain that one interpretation is truer than another. The goal is as yet unattained; as our discussion suggests, it probably lies far in the future.<sup>54</sup>

Allport goes on to say that the "major task of psychology today is to enlarge its horizons without sacrificing its gains." And he calls for a psychology that is relevant to man's major problems, and concerned, not only with what a man is, but also what he may become. It is this latter concern that is the focal point of the next chapter.

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<sup>54</sup> Allport, Becoming, p. 17.

## CHAPTER IV

### HEALING, HEALTH, AND THE NATURE OF MAN

What can a man become? What is a "normal" person? What does it mean to say a human being is "healthy?" A discussion of the human predicament seems to beg such questions, for which the answers must be stated primarily in terms of one's transcendental concepts. Yet these questions are of vital concern to the psychologist as he approaches the study of man. And for the therapist or counselor, an understanding of human health and potentialities is necessary, so that the goals and the means of the healing process may be clearly spelled out and actualized. Hence this chapter will deal with the underlying assumptions that make an understanding of healing and health possible, first in theological terms, and then in terms of the science of psychology. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the ways in which theological and psychological concepts of man may meet and overlap.

#### I. THE NATURE OF THE TERMS: HEALTH VS. NORMALITY

The concept of health is one of the fundamental presuppositions that psychologists and counselors will necessarily hold and be aware of, at least implicitly. As Sidney Jourard has pointed out, health is not a "given." It is "a value concept," and as such is something that "we must define . . ."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jourard, The Transparent Self, p. 100.

What Jourard has in mind is not simply health in a medical sense, but what is more likely to be referred to as mental health, or even spiritual well-being. Likewise, the concern here is with health in its more etymological sense of wholeness, as applied to the person in his totality. It is in this regard that health is a value concept.

It is well to differentiate, as Jourard does, between health and normality. Whereas the former must be defined in the context of basic assumptions, normality is, by definition, a relative term that refers to "those patterns of behavior which are common or typical in a specified group--the kinds of things sociologists tabulate."<sup>2</sup> Normality has to do with what people actually do, and this may or may not be in accord with what is defined as healthy.

Normality will be described differently in various cultures and eras. Health, on the other hand, is a concept less likely to change, for it has to do with what a person can be or might be, rather than with how the "average" person acts in a given time or place. To be sure, health and normality are not entirely unrelated, for health (or wholeness) is defined by abstracting certain valued behaviors from among the vast repertoire of human actions. But unlike normality, the definition of health depends upon an underlying concept of man, on the basis of which the valued behaviors are selected.

Sometimes, of course, normality and health are considered synonymous. This occurs when what is statistically average is deemed the criterion of health, in which case health is subject to a cultural

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

relativism. Or normality may simply mean what is suggested above about health, so that the valued behaviors are called normal, and normality becomes a normative rather than a relative term. Either use of the word, normality, may be acceptable, as long as it is clearly defined. But in this instance, as already stated, normality will be regarded in a statistical sense, and health defined as a value concept derived from some basic assumptions about the nature of man.

## II. TOWARD A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HEALTH

The transcendental concepts about the nature of man discussed in this report point toward a definition of health in the same theological terms. In Tillich's words,

healing means reuniting that which is estranged, giving a center to what is split, overcoming the split between God and man, man and his world, man and himself.<sup>3</sup>

If man is "estranged from his true being," he is, by definition, not whole or healthy, but finds wholeness as he is reunited with his true self, his fellow man, and with the ground of his being. Health means being what one "essentially is and ought to be," and thus overcoming the human predicament, which is man's estrangement.<sup>4</sup>

Such a definition of health leaves unanswered the question of what man essentially is and ought to be. It is at this juncture that one's basic assumptions come into play. If it is true, as Jourard has said, that "health is not given in nature," and is something "we

<sup>3</sup>Tillich, Systematic Theology, II, 166.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 45; quoted above, page 22.

must define," there is no way to avoid making value judgments and positing transcendental concepts when defining health. To be sure, one's fundamental beliefs are based variously on one's own experience, on the experiences, thought and work of others, on scientific research, and so on. But the final decision in making a definition of health requires value judgments, and results in a statement of one's beliefs regarding the nature of man.

### Jesus, the Essential Man

Christians inevitably point to Jesus the Christ as the basis of their understanding of what man "essentially is and ought to be." As a man, Jesus was subject to all the conditions of estrangement, including death, but was not Himself estranged. The center of His being remained in unity with God--a unity He maintained against all the attacks of estranged existence.

Jesus reveals the divine love for creation by surrendering Himself to its existential self-destructiveness. It is in this way that He reconciles and reunites, or, as Tillich puts it, He conquers "the gap between essence and existence."<sup>5</sup>

In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, then, the Christian sees man as he essentially is. Jesus is the actualization of the image of God in which man is created. It is Jesus, the fully human person, the whole man, Who is the measure of human wholeness or health. And through the divine power that was manifest in Jesus as the Christ,

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

salvation, that is, the healing that leads to wholeness, is offered to all men. Jesus is thus both The Man, and the Christ, through whom other men may realize in themselves the image of God.

### Healing and Salvation

The word, salvation, is from the Latin salvus, which means "healed." Tillich makes clear that the Christian concept of salvation "can be applied to every act of healing: to the healing of sickness, of demonic possession, of servitude to sin and to the ultimate power of death."<sup>6</sup> Jesus' ministry may be seen as a healing (saving) ministry, for these were the things He was concerned with--sickness, demonic possession, servitude to sin, and the power of death. Those who have been made whole through Jesus the Christ speak of their newness of life, of life abundant, or life eternal--all of which expressions try to convey that life is radically different for those who live "in Christ."

Describing the life of the "new creature," Tillich comments,

Obviously, the characteristics of the New Being are the opposite of those of estrangement, namely, faith instead of unbelief, surrender instead of hubris, love instead of concupiscence.<sup>7</sup>

That is, sin or estrangement is overcome in those who participate in the New Being in Christ. Concupiscence--man's desire to reunite himself by his own efforts with that from which he is estranged--may be given up in the face of the reconciliation that has been effected by God In Christ. Hubris--man's putting himself at the

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<sup>6</sup>Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I. 146.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., II, 177.

center of his world--is done away with when man acknowledges the true ground and center of his being. And unbelief--man's turning away from God--is conquered by faith, which makes possible the receiving of the New Being in Christ.

Christians have always emphasized the importance of faith in man's relationship to God, but it should be made clear that faith is not merely the intellectual assent to certain doctrines. Faith is the "state of being grasped" by the Ultimate, Who is at work seeking reconciliation with estranged man before man can respond with faith. Faith implies, first, God's action, and then man's responsibility--his need and ability to respond--to the New Being in Christ Who seeks his response. Faith is the "channel" through which God works. And faith is man's acceptance that he is accepted, even in the face of his unacceptability. Tillich summarizes this by saying that this means

one is drawn into the power of the New Being in Christ, which makes faith possible; that it is the state of unity between God and man, no matter how fragmentarily realized. Accepting that one is accepted is the paradox of salvation without which there would be no salvation but only despair.<sup>8</sup>

Tillich warns against the unbiblical belief that salvation is either total or non-existent, which he calls an "absurd and demonic idea."<sup>9</sup> He argues that there is no absolute alternative between salvation and condemnation, and states that

Only as salvation is understood as healing and saving power through the New Being in all history is the problem put on another level. In some degree, all men participate in the healing power of the New Being. Otherwise, they would have no being. The self-destructive consequences of estrangement

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 179.    <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 167.

would have destroyed them.. But no men are totally healed, not even those who have encountered the healing power as it appears in Jesus as the Christ.<sup>10</sup>

Christ may be seen, then, as the "ultimate criterion of every healing and saving process," though that power may be found even where Christ's name is not known. Those who have encountered Him are only "fragmentarily healed." "The Christian remains in a state of relativity with respect to salvation," says Tillich, but in Christ Himself the healing quality is "complete and unlimited," which is why He is called the Christ. Wherever there is healing power in mankind, "it must be judged by the saving power in Jesus as the Christ."<sup>11</sup>

#### Christ, the Savior and Healer

To call the Christ the criterion and the source of health and salvation is to proclaim Him as Lord. Being the criterion, Christ is the Judge of all men, whose sin and estrangement are seen in the light of His wholeness and His unity with the Father, with others, and Himself. And as the source of health, He enables men to come to terms with their estrangement and their brokenness through reconciliation and reunion in Him.

It is faith--being grasped by the New Being--that allows man to face his sin and acknowledge his responsibility for his predicament. Only in faith can Christ's followers confess, "And there is no health in us."<sup>12</sup> Though the Church usually speaks of confession and absolution, or of repentence and forgiveness, in that order, it is actually

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>The Book of Common Prayer, p. 6.

the other way around. It is the knowledge that one is already accepted that makes the confession of sin possible. It is the assurance that one if received and forgiven that enables him to repent--to turn away from self and toward God as the center of one's life.

Though Christians regard Jesus Christ as the criterion and the source of God's healing power, and as He Who overcomes estrangement and sin, Christians cannot pretend themselves to be the epitome of health. It is obvious that men still live under the conditions of estrangement, and that even the greatest of the saints are not completely healed in the midst of this life. The basis of human faith and hope is the New Being which has appeared in Christ. But the work begun in Christ is not yet completed, so that Christians look for His Second Coming, when sin and estrangement will be finally overcome, and the promises of God in Christ will be fulfilled.

The Christian rejoices, not because he has been totally healed, but because he has been accepted by, and reconciled with, the ground of his being, even though "there is no health in" him. The man of faith does not, therefore, seek health for its own sake, or pretend that he can make himself acceptable, for estranged man cannot heal or save himself. But to the extent that man receives the healing power of God, and participates in the New Being, he realizes the promise of God to restore him to health--to what he essentially is. Tillich suggests that this participation and realization may be momentary and fragmentary in man. Yet those who are grasped by the New Being will be constantly renewed and find that their sin and estrangement is overcome. The signs of wholeness, in the words of Tillich, are "faith instead of

unbelief, surrender instead of hubris, love instead of concupiscence." It is the promise of God in Christ that health and salvation are offered to all men that the Church proclaims to the world.

### III. HEALING AND HEALTH AS PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

If the goal of psychology, as Gordon Allport puts it, is to "reduce discord among our philosophies of man," the presentation of a view of man in Christian terms may only illustrate how formidable the task of psychology is. What, after all, can psychologists do with the concepts that are peculiar to a particular religious faith, it might well be asked. Yet, theology and psychology may share a common concern with man to the extent that each discipline recognizes what has been called the human predicament. And likewise, both psychologists and theologians wrestle with the questions of healing and health. Surely it is in finding and clarifying the areas of overlapping assumptions about man that psychology begins to fulfill the assignment that Allport has suggested for it.

The concern of psychologists for the health and well-being of man has been given a tremendous boost by the advent of Freudian thought and practice, the mental health movement, and the rise of clinical psychology. The focus, however, has in general been upon illness rather than health, and psychologists seem better able to describe ailing man than whole man. Psychology can, to some degree, provide an understanding of man in the face of his predicament, and illustrate how man responds to some of the elements of destiny that impinge upon him. But psychologists are harder put to describe and explain how man

deals creatively out of his freedom with the conditions of life as he experiences them. Terms such as psychological or mental health remain ambiguous and misleading, as many psychologists will readily admit.

Yet psychology needs a concept of health, both to give substance to what it calls illness, and to provide direction for those who use psychology in the service of healing. To work out a viable definition of health, psychologists must study so-called healthy persons at least to the same extent that they have already examined the mentally ill. The establishment of such a definition could conceivably aid in reducing the discord among the philosophies of man.

#### Current Theories of Psychological Health

A number of theories of health already exist on the psychological scene. An interesting and fruitful discussion of these is presented by Marie Jahoda in Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health.<sup>13</sup> Her survey of the relevant literature has led her to summarize six approaches to the notion of health that are presently held by psychologists.

The Criteria of Health. Stressing that she is presenting various criteria of "positive mental health," Jahoda categorizes six proposed indicators of health as follows:

- 1) attitudes of an individual toward his own self, some aspects of which include accessibility to consciousness, correctness of the self-concept, feelings about the self, and the sense of identity;<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Marie Jahoda, Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-30.

- 2) the individual's style and degree of growth, development or self-actualization, which entails motivational processes, and one's "investment in living";<sup>15</sup>
- 3) psychological integration as a central function, related to which Jahoda discusses the balance of psychic forces, the importance of a unifying outlook on life, and resistance to stress;<sup>16</sup>
- 4) independence or autonomy, which concerns the individual's relation to his environment, and the degree to which behavior is regulated from within;<sup>17</sup>
- 5) perception of reality, two aspects of which are freedom from need distortion, and empathy or social sensitivity;<sup>18</sup>
- 6) environmental mastery, under which heading Jahoda looks at such things as adequacy in love, work, and play, the meeting of situational requirements, adaptation and adjustment, and problem solving.<sup>19</sup>

The first three listed criteria of mental health emphasize the person's relation to himself, while the last three are more concerned with the individual's relation to his environment. Jahoda points out, however, that these six approaches to the concept of mental health are not mutually exclusive, and, in fact, overlap in many ways, which Jahoda finds encouraging.

It must be admitted, however, that there does not yet exist a clear and unified psychological concept of health. A great deal of research is needed, but its success, states Jahoda, "will to no small degree depend on further clarification of some general ideas in the mental health field."<sup>20</sup> Jahoda thus underscores the need for clearly defined fundamental assumptions about man which may lead to the development of theories and constructs concerning health that can be empirically

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-35.    <sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-45.    <sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 45-49.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 49-53.    <sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 53-56.    <sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

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Specific Vs. General Definitions of Health. Jahoda proceeds to try to clarify some of the issues that have been raised in the effort to define mental health. She begins by noting that the tremendous diversity among persons regarded as healthy suggests that multiple criteria of health may be necessary. It may be impossible to find a common denominator by which health can be measured for all people; the six sets of criteria presented above may actually point to the legitimate variations that exist among different persons.

The question of health is raised in The Cocktail Party when Celia wonders if she is "abnormal." The answer she receives is that "we must find out what would be normal/For you, before we use the word 'abnormal.'"<sup>21</sup> T. S. Eliot is here clearly suggesting that health (or "normality," in this case) must finally be defined in terms of the individual concerned.

To imply that defining health is a matter of understanding wholeness in terms of each individual is to present scientists with a seemingly endless task. But those who wish to preserve individual uniqueness and the possibility of a scientific approach to the question of health may agree with Jahoda that "every man is in some respects like no other man, in some respects like some other men, and in some respects like all other men."<sup>22</sup> If that statement is acceptable to psychologists,

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<sup>21</sup>Eliot, op. cit., p. 361.

<sup>22</sup>Jahoda, Op. cit., p. 69; Jahoda is here paraphrasing a statement in Kluckhohn and Murray, Personality in Nature, Society and Culture (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948).

they may well be able to incorporate the question of health into what Gordon Allport calls a broadened psychology that is both idiographic and nomothetic in its study of man. Such a psychology may avoid overgeneralizations and at the same time allow room for the complexities of human beings.

Health vs. Illness. Another knotty question discussed by Jahoda is the relationship of health and disease. Is mental health the absence of disease, or vice-versa? Can a person be sick in some ways and healthy in others? These are complex questions that remain to be answered in the field of psychology. It is possible to conceive of health and illness as independent and contrasting conditions, and to define them for heuristic purposes as ideal types. But it is worth noting Tillich's thought that no person is either totally whole, or absolutely without elements of wholeness, though he may be described as sick. This question is but one aspect of the larger problem regarding mental health wherein the urgent need for further thought and research is readily seen.

Health and Values. Jahoda reminds her readers that defining health is a matter of values. As such, health is inter-related with other values, which may at times conflict with each other. Psycho-somatic medicine and the work of social scientists combine to suggest that so-called mental health is not unrelated to both physiological and sociological conditions. What the physician or the society calls good or healthy may not agree with what the psychologist defines as mental health. And the values of society may not be the same in

different times and places.

The considerations should serve as a reminder that no definition of health can be absolutized, and that mental health per se may not be the highest value in life. If achieving health becomes an end in itself, it can become a false god—an attempt at self-salvation or self-healing on one's own terms.

### Health and the Means of Healing

If estranged man does, in fact, have a "sense of sin," he is bound to wonder if wholeness and reconciliation are available to him. And the big question is, how may health be attained? Assuming that wholeness can be defined, how does one get there from here? These complicated and intriguing questions can and should haunt those who engage in the study of man. And the same questions demand answers from therapists and counselors, if they wish to pretend that they are engaged in the process of healing with their clients.

Psychology is not without some tentative answers to the question of what leads to health, and a few of these will be looked at briefly here.

Sidney Jourard and Transparency. Sidney Jourard's volume, The Transparent Self, is, in essence, an essay on health and how to achieve and maintain it. It is not a systematic treatise, but an effort to relate a good deal of existing knowledge to his own understanding of illness and health. Jourard is concerned, not only with mental health, but also with well-being in its broadest aspects—with the physical, mental, and "spiritual" aspects of human health.

"estrangement, alienation from one's real self," writes Jourard, is "a sickness which is so widely shared that no one recognizes it."<sup>23</sup> Jourard thus relates health to being oneself--to "real-self-being," as he puts it. He sees playing one's role in life to the exclusion of being oneself as a major cause of illness. Roles are unavoidable, to be sure. But Jourard adds that "everywhere we see people who have sold their soul, or their real self, if you wish," to fulfill a role for its own sake.<sup>24</sup> Such persons tend to relate to others and to themselves only in terms of their role, and hence they lose touch with their real selves, and with other persons as persons.

If hiding our true selves under our role makes us ill (e.g., anxious, despairing, without purpose or a sense of identity, or even physically ill), disclosing ourself to another person leads to health, says Jourard. Self-disclosure and "being transparent to others, seems to be a necessary condition for being open to oneself."<sup>25</sup> But showing one's true self to another is risky and often painful, and it does not usually happen except where there is trust and mutual regard. Jourard believes that faith and love are necessary conditions for people to disclose themselves and to come to know another individual as a person.<sup>26</sup> And knowing oneself is tantamount to being oneself--to being an integrated, whole, healthy person.<sup>27</sup>

According to Jourard, a counselor or therapist must be one who knows himself and can be himself, and be willing, as necessary, to

<sup>23</sup> Jourard, op. cit., p. 23. <sup>24</sup> Ibid. <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., see, for example, pp. 30 and 147. <sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

disclose himself, so that his client may be able to do the same. The counselor (or anyone in the other healing professions, says Jourard) must have a genuine concern for his client, be open to him, and be one whom the client can trust, so that self-disclosure may take place. Many kinds of "talking therapy," beginning with Freud, are designed to let the client reveal himself to another person, states Jourard, and therein lies his hope of being healed. Healing occurs as the client becomes open to himself, and can risk actually being himself.

Abraham Maslow and Human Becoming. Like Jourard, Abraham Maslow is concerned about authentic being—being one's true self, or becoming oneself. Maslow would like to spell out a "psychology of health" to complement the psychology of sickness that Freud and others have offered.<sup>28</sup>

Maslow's theory of basic or instinctoid needs was discussed briefly in the preceding chapter of this paper. It is his contention that, if these built-in needs (for sustenance, safety, belongingness, love and respect) remain ungratified, the individual will be motivated primarily by the deficiencies resulting from the unmet needs. The lack of basic need gratification "breeds illness," and causes people to be neurotic, or otherwise sick.<sup>29</sup> Maslow conceives of psychological needs as similar to physiological needs for such things as iodine or vitamin C. Unless these needs are met, at least minimally, the person remains deficient, unhealthy, or unwhole. His behavior will be determined, in large measure, by the needs he feels are unfulfilled.

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<sup>28</sup> Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, pp. 3ff. <sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-21.

If the basic needs are satisfactorily met, the "inner nature" of a person may then emerge and begin to direct the person's life. He will then be "growth motivated," rather than deficiency motivated, and move toward "individuation, autonomy, self-actualization, self-development, productiveness, self-realization," which terms are "all crudely synonymous."<sup>30</sup> Maslow admits that growth and self-actualization and their synonyms designate a "vaguely perceived area rather than a sharply defined concept."<sup>31</sup> But in his book he shares his excitement over what he sees as the emerging concern for a psychology of health, or, as his title states, a "psychology of being."

Maslow writes more as a theorist and scientist than as a therapist. But his thought has many implications for those in the helping professions. For instance, he states that "no psychological health is possible unless this essential core of the person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by others and by himself."<sup>32</sup> Maslow tries to provide the theoretical underpinnings for what many therapists and counselors already know as to how they may foster self-acceptance and self-actualization in their clients. And Maslow's broad approach to the subject leaves room for the theories of Freudians and behaviorists, and of other social scientists, as well as the so-called Third Force psychologists that he draws on so freely.

Health and the Ontological Question. The work of Jourard and Maslow illustrates, to some extent, the context within which many

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 22.    <sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

psychologists are grappling with the concepts of healing and health. They freely use words such as "inner nature," "being," "becoming," "estrangement" from one's "real self," "faith" and "love," "human potentialities," and "self-actualization." Though these men are avowedly concerned about health as psychologists, it may be seen that their concern transcends psychology as such, and that they are dealing with metaphysical and ontological questions. The terminology is, in part, philosophical, and cannot be otherwise, for to define health in a comprehensive way is to deal with the question of human nature. Perhaps the obvious query about psychologists such as Maslow and Jourard is, how good are they as philosophers? What are their basic assumptions?

Rollo May: Health and Being. Rollo May, the one who has raised the issue of the psychologist's basic assumptions, himself deals frankly with the ontological questions inherent in the understanding of health and healing. He speaks less about health as such than he does about being. He states, for instance, that the "achieving of a sense of being is a goal of all therapy,"<sup>33</sup> so that the client may "experience his existence as real."<sup>34</sup>

May theorizes that "every existing person has the character of self-affirmation, the need to preserve its centeredness."<sup>35</sup> Illness, e.g., neurosis, is "precisely the method the individual uses to preserve his own center, his own existence."<sup>36</sup> Further, all persons have

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<sup>33</sup> May, Existence, p. 44.    <sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>35</sup> May, Existential Psychology, p. 77.    <sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

"the need and the possibility of going out from their centeredness to participate in other beings."<sup>37</sup> This "always involves risk"--the risk of losing one's centeredness or identity, and inevitably entails anxiety--ontological anxiety in the face of possible non-being. Mental health does not consist, then, of freedom from anxiety. Rather, the objective and one of the purposes of therapy is to confront anxiety constructively.<sup>38</sup>

Psychotherapy is conceived by May as an opportunity for two persons to "encounter" each other. This requires all the skill and knowledge that the therapist's training and experience can provide. But it requires, also, the therapist's willingness to share the world of the client, to try to experience what the client is thinking and feeling, and to risk himself on behalf of the client. The encounter can enable the client to come to terms with his world in new ways, to increase his self-consciousness and sense of being, and to deal more effectively with his anxiety and guilt. "The goal of therapy is to help the patient actualize his potentialities."<sup>39</sup> No static definition of health is appropriate here. It must, in the final analysis, be defined by each person for himself in the context of his own world and his own potentialities.

Carl Rogers and the Role of the Healer. The work and thought of Carl Rogers bears mentioning here, for Rogers' theories in the area

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 78. Italics in original.

<sup>38</sup>See also May, Psychology and the Human Dilemma, p. 105

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

of healing and health have grown out of his many years of experience as a psychotherapist. He was one of the first therapists to let others see what goes on in a therapy session through the use of films and recordings. Rogers has shown a willingness to put his ideas to the test, to discover, by empirical means, what makes healing possible.

A number of Rogers' most significant writings have been collected in a volume called On Becoming a Person, which serves as a good introduction of his view of man. Like Rollo May, Rogers does not attempt to define health as a state of being. He speaks, rather, of the "capacity and the tendency, latent if not evident, to move forward toward maturity."<sup>40</sup> He uses terms such as "growth tendency," "the drive toward self-actualization," and the "process of becoming" to describe what he calls "the mainspring of life," upon which growth and healing depend.<sup>41</sup>

Rogers outlines his concept of the "fully functioning" (i.e., healthy) person in a chapter called, "A Therapist's View of the Good Life."<sup>42</sup> Such a person is open to his experience, and not defensive. He lives in the present, rather than the past or future, and Rogers calls this "existential living." The fully functioning person shows "an increasing trust in his organism," that is, in his own judgments, and in his ability to do what "feels right" in each existential situation. Such a person enjoys a sense of psychic freedom, and can "own" and be responsible for his feelings and behavior. He relates creatively

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<sup>40</sup>Rogers, op. cit., p. 33.    <sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 35 and p. 55.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 183ff.

to his environment, and can risk investing himself in close relationships with others. He can "be that self which one truly is."

Rogers has written extensively about healing, or "helping," relationships, and the volume cited here summarizes his views and some of the related research findings. Though his work has been as a therapist, he makes clear that his hypotheses regarding helping relationships, apply not only to what goes on in the therapist's office, but to all human interactions, as well.

The therapist (or other helping person) can assist in the growth and healing of another, says Rogers, if the therapist can (1) be himself, that is, be genuine and transparent, be his "real feelings," and thus be trustworthy; (2) warmly accept and "prize" the other person with "unconditional positive regard;" and (3) see the other's self and his world as he sees them.<sup>43</sup> In these ways, the therapist may enable his client to become a more fully functioning person.

#### IV. PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CONCEPT OF MAN

##### The Underlying Presuppositions

A brief resume of the work of four contemporary psychologists concerned with the question of health is hardly an adequate survey of a field in which so many have made important contributions. Yet as Maslow suggests when he speaks of the Third Force, there appear more and more to be significant overlappings in the views of these therapists and other psychologists, as the examples cited above illustrate.

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 37-38.

These men show many similarities in theory and practice, and they reveal a desire to develop a psychology of the whole man. To their credit, most of these psychologists are open to new ideas, willing to accept critically but gratefully the heritage of their predecessors, and are agreed on the urgent need to put their theories to the test, both in the laboratory, and in the therapist's office.

To be sure, psychology has a long way to go. Like any science, it may not expect its final chapters to be written in the foreseeable future, if ever. Nor can it be expected to settle the disputes related to the question of man which fall in the area of basic assumptions that precede scientific investigation. But as Gordon Allport hopes, psychology may well be able to "reduce discord" among the several philosophies of man, if psychology itself does not claim to have the final answers.

As long as science remains the servant of men, and is not allowed to become their master, there may be hope that Allport's vision will be at least partially realized. The psychologists referred to in this report, for example, seem to have a great deal in common, even though their philosophies of man do not appear to be identical. But more to the point, a Christian view of man, as herein presented, seems to be at least somewhat compatible with the theories of the Third Force and other psychologists discussed here. Whether or not a psychologist's outlook is called Christian, his psychology may well be the meeting place for both Christian and non-Christian views of man, if it is acceptable to both. If psychologists can refrain from being dogmatic, their varying transcendental conceptions may not stand in the way of

their recognizing the partial truths of a great variety of approaches to the study of man.

### Theology and Psychology: Where Do They Meet?

To spell out the precise relationship between a Christian view of man and a particular psychology would require a detailed study of each instance to be examined. This will not be undertaken here, but it is worth noting that such studies have been done, with thought-provoking results. An interesting recent example of this is found in Thomas C. Oden's book, *Kerygma and Counseling*.<sup>44</sup> The third of Oden's five chapters is entitled, "The Theology of Carl Rogers," in which the author draws some provocative parallels between Christian concepts and several categories of Rogers' thought.

Oden likens the concept of sin (or the human predicament) to Rogers' notion of "incongruence," which is defined as "a disjunction between self and experience."<sup>45</sup> Salvation (i.e., the saving or healing event) is seen as similar to the Rogerian idea of being met with unconditional positive regard by a congruent and empathic person.<sup>46</sup> And the new life in Christ is compared to Rogers' concept of the self-actualizing, fully functioning person.<sup>47</sup>

Oden takes care to point out the limitations of these analogies, since Christian thought and Rogers' theories are not simply two different statements of the same truths. But Oden's intent is to show

<sup>44</sup> Thomas C. Oden, Kerygma and Counseling (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 91.    <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 95.    <sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 101f.

that Rogers' client-centered therapy "embodies a certain implicit theological orientation," and that Rogers "is already a theologian of sorts."<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, the theme of this paper is that every psychologist or counselor is a "theologian of sorts." It is because of this that psychologists and counselors are urged to be aware of their basic assumptions—the transcendental conceptions that shape one's implicit theology, and find expression in the healing work that the therapist or counselor tries to undertake. The scientist or the professional healer will be true to himself, and do greater justice to his calling, to the extent that he lets his underlying philosophy be explicit, so that it may give shape and meaning to the tasks to which he commits himself.

#### The Christian and the Healing Process

Although there is a place for preaching one's beliefs in the community of men, Oden's book is not an effort to convince Carl Rogers or anyone else that they should be a Christian. Oden points out, rather, that the Christian may find the embodiment of this theology in the theories and methods of a psychotherapist such as Rogers. This may or may not concern Rogers himself, whose implicit theology could conceivably be thoroughly humanistic in his own mind. But if that is the case, the work of Rogers is but one example of the way various theologies and philosophies can overlap, at least in Western culture.

It has been shown that a number of psychologists present theories

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

that are of interest to the avowed Christian. One may look in vain for a so-called Christian psychology, for no systematic science of the psyche is available that Christians could agree on in every respect. But the Christian may find expression of his basic assumptions in the theories of a great many psychologists, whose work may be in accord with Christian beliefs. As a psychologist or therapist, the Christian need not be concerned with whether his professional colleagues share his basic viewpoint. He may rather rejoice in that he shares many concord with his associates, can learn much from them, and join with them in the continuing search for truth.

The Christian does approach the question of healing and health with certain prejudice, however, and he might as well admit it. This prejudice or basic belief has to do with the nature of reality, in which the Christian finds the expression of God's love and healing purpose. Oden states this belief in his final chapter when he says,

Our thesis has been that effective secular psychotherapy implicitly assumes an accepting reality which is made explicit in the Christian kerygma.<sup>49</sup>

"Therapy" for the "psyche" is precisely what the Gospel is all about, Oden states. Whether therapy or healing is conceived of in Christian terms, the person seeking it hopes that healing is a possibility, and the therapist assumes that it is. Those who see the Christ as the fulfillment of human hopes, and the incarnation of God's healing and saving power, are bound to see in any act of healing, the reality of

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 146. The word, *kerygma* (from the Greek), refers to the proclamation of the Gospel message.

God's love as revealed in the Christ.

The Christian's concern as a Christian, therefore, is to proclaim an act of healing for what it is--the evidence of God's saving purpose as known through the Christ. The therapist or other healer may be seen as the mediator of the divine healing power that is available to all men.

This is not, however, a call for Christian polemics. It is, rather, an invitation to those engaged in healing to relate their implicit assumptions to the explicit proclamation of the Good News. It is also an invitation to those who have experienced healing to rejoice in the cosmic significance of their being received and made whole by the New Being in Christ, who comes to restore and to heal that which is estranged.

### Summary

This discussion of health and the means of achieving it clearly indicates that these issues remain highly debatable. A theological approach to these questions suggests, in Christian terms, that Jesus the Christ is the criterion and the source of all healing. Presumably, the Christian speaks out of his experience as one who has been renewed and made whole by God in Christ. Likewise, the psychologist or counselor may speak out of his experience as one who has studied and engaged in the healing process, and seen people become more healthy.

Though the descriptions of healing and health may vary widely, there is general agreement that healing can and does take place. To those in the healing professions, the need for clarifying basic assumptions and for greater research in the area of healing and health

is apparent. The Christian agrees with this, and gladly joins in the ongoing quest for truth. But the Christian brings to his work as healer or scientist his faith that the healing already seen in the lives of estranged men—however it is described—is further evidence of the saving purpose of God in Christ.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, AND CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

#### Summary

Following the plea of Rollo May and others that psychologists and counselors must be aware of the basic assumptions that define their goals and underlie scientific study, this report is a discussion of some questions about the nature of man. The content of the questions was suggested by a scene from T. S. Eliot's play, The Cocktail Party, which provides a view of man's condition in terms of the Christian faith. The theology of Paul Tillich was used as the framework for this discussion, because of the coherence of his understanding of Christian beliefs, and because his existentialist language offered a bridge between his theological views and the thought of many psychologists.

In particular, Tillich's notion of the human predicament, which is experienced as sin or estrangement, was regarded as especially helpful. For an examination of the work of some contemporary psychologists suggested that the human predicament is what they, too, are trying to describe and understand. And estrangement, a word that some therapists also use, appeared to be what those who seek therapy are, in fact, wrestling with.

It was further pointed out that psychologists and counselors also need a concept of the healthy or whole man, and an understanding of the healing process, in terms of their basic assumptions. To this end, a

Christian view of healing and health was presented as one example of such transcendental concepts. Current theories of health in psychological terms were then summarized, and the views of four psychologists on healing and health were reviewed, because they seemed largely to agree with each other, and their theories could be seen in relation to Christian concepts. Finally, a specific instance of relating Christian theology to the thought of a practicing psychotherapist was briefly summarized, with reference to Thomas Oden's essay of the theology of Carl Rogers.

#### Some Additional Unanswered Questions:

It seems quite likely that some questions were raised in this report that were settled. Three questions that have been implied will be mentioned here as possibilities for further exploration and study.

Is Man Good or Evil? First, it might be asked whether man is essentially evil or good. The answer to this involved question depends, initially, on definitions of good and evil. Defining good and evil entails making value judgments, based on one's fundamental beliefs, which will not be argued here. The purpose of raising this question is, rather, to suggest some of its implication for psychologists and counselors. For if man is regarded as good, he is apt to be treated differently than if he is considered primarily as evil.

It is, perhaps, the influence of Puritanism in American culture that has fostered the implicit assumption of man's basically evil nature. Noting the Christian emphasis on the inherent sinfulness of man, Tillich has stated that theology also "must emphasize the positive

valuation of man in his essential nature," and guard against denials of "man's created goodness."<sup>1</sup>

A number of Third Force psychologists seem to favor a somewhat optimistic view of man. Maslow, for instance, has written that man's "inner nature"

seems not to be intrinsically evil, but rather neutral or positively good. What we call evil behavior appears most often to be secondary reaction to frustration of this intrinsic nature.<sup>2</sup>

Maslow's language is rather guarded here, but these two sentences are most thought-provoking. Undoubtedly one thing that Maslow has in mind is the change that can take place in people who enter therapy, or who are otherwise helped or "cured." Behavior usually called evil—destructiveness, hatred, defensiveness, et al—may give way to more "acceptable" actions, such as concern for others, affection, and openness, which are more apt to be called good. If these changes are regarded as "uncovering" man's inner nature, as Maslow and others suggest, then it is reasonable to say that man is not intrinsically evil.

As was discussed in Chapter IV above, being one's true self has been defined as the goal of the growing and healing process. This clearly implies that being oneself is a good thing. But it should be noted that the concept of real-self-being is a difficult one for those who would define good behavior in terms of suppressing "evil" impulses and covering up the "beast" in man. This latter view sees man as

<sup>1</sup>Tillich, Systematic Theology, II, 38.

<sup>2</sup>Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 3

basically bad, and regards real-self-being as something to be avoided, for the sake of man and society. It is at this point that some of the Third Force psychologists challenge what may be the prevailing view of man in this culture, and force Christians to take another look at the implications of their traditional concept of sin.

Yet it is the emphasis placed on the fundamental acceptance of the individual as he really is that may give Christians pause to consider what Maslow, Rogers, Jourard, and other psychologists are saying. Each of these men states clearly that being oneself is possible only in the face of unconditional positive regard, as Rogers has defined it. Being accepted, and accepting one's acceptance, are what enables a person to feel less threatened by others, and to lessen his anger or defensiveness as means of protecting himself. The therapist's invitation to his client to be himself is not a call for unrestricted expression of negative feelings (though some expression of feelings may be expected), but rather the attempt to convey to the client that he is prized and warmly regarded, even though some of his impulses or behavior are "unacceptable." When he knows he is accepted, a person is able to deal more creatively with his feelings, and change his behavior. It is in this context of acceptance and positive regard that being one's true self may be held as a good thing.

None of this is to say, however, that man can avoid evil. Maslow's idea that "what we call evil behavior appears most often to be a secondary reaction to frustration of this intrinsic nature" bears further thought and study. But Maslow himself suggests that the frustration of man's inner nature seems inevitable. Man, in other words,

cannot escape his instinctoid needs, his limitations, or any of the other conditions of estrangement into which he is born, no matter how the conditions may be conceptualized. Moreover, man's need for love and acceptance indicates his interdependence with other men, and his inability to save or heal himself. As has already been discussed, these concepts find close parallels in the Christian notions of sin and healing. For the Christian, evil may be seen most clearly in man's refusal to accept responsibility for his own estrangement, and in his self-centered attempts to save himself. This context for the definition of good and evil may give added meaning to the discussion of this question as it is raised by some of the Third Force psychologists.

At one point, Maslow speaks of man's inner nature as "prior to good and evil."<sup>3</sup> This interesting comment is reminiscent of the Biblical notion of man's original innocence before the Fall. And it serves as a reminder that the concepts of good and evil entail making a conscious choice between alternatives, and hence the actualization of man's freedom. The idea that man is totally determined by forces beyond his control is rejected by Maslow, and, of course, by Christians, among others. Man is assumed to be free to choose good or evil. He loses his innocence as soon as he makes a choice, and thus realizes his "finite" freedom. In this sense, every man "falls" from innocence, which is his state before choosing, and is "prior to good and evil."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>4</sup>See Tillich's discussion of the meaning of the Fall, op. cit., II, 29-39. He refers to the Fall as "the transition from essence to existence."

What is Human Nature? The difficulty of defining "human nature" is amply illustrated in the previous question. What does it mean to speak of human nature, or of "man's intrinsic nature?"

Tillich points out that

Human nature can mean man's essential or created nature; it can mean man's existential or estranged nature; and it can mean man's nature in the ambiguous unity of the other two.<sup>5</sup>

This is a question which is not adequately dealt with by the psychologists referred to in this report. When Maslow, for instance, is theorizing about human needs, he is dealing with man as he exists, and with some of the conditions of his estrangement. But he also speaks of man's "intrinsic" nature, and thus clearly implies that man has what Tillich calls an "essential or created nature." Concepts such as "self-actualization" or "real-self-being" suggest that it is man's essential nature that is to be actualized, and is the basis for a definition of health.

Again, this may be primarily a question of defining and being aware of one's basic assumptions. The Christian assumes that it is in Jesus the Christ that one may see the "essential" Man. Other definitions of "intrinsic" or essential man are possible, and these may be quite different. But in any case, one's view of essential man remains in the realm of basic assumptions, and is only more or less actualized in the lives of existing man.<sup>6</sup> In the words of Tillich, it is the "ambiguous unity" of the two natures of man that is seen

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 147. <sup>6</sup>Maslow, op. cit., pp. 196ff.

in the therapist's consulting room and spelled out in the psychologist's theories. There are no persons who are fully healed or self-actualized, so that a definition of essential man can only be inferred from limited evidence provided by man living in estrangement. Tillich's distinctions concerning human nature are useful, however, for they are necessary in order to define and understand man, both as he is existentially, and as he may become as he moves toward greater health and self-actualization.

What is the Role of the Counselor? A final major question only hinted at in this report has to do with the role of the counselor or therapist as spelled out in terms of his basic assumptions. In its practical dimension, this is the question of methodology—the techniques and know-how that may be required for one who is involved in the healing process. But in its theoretical dimension, this is a question of stating the goals and objectives the therapist may have as healer.

One way of defining the role of the counselor in the language of this report is as follows: the healer is called to help estranged man become what he essentially is. This broad definition may be applied to any of the healing arts, as well as to other relationships that exist in the society of men. But to say that the therapist or counselor should assist his clients to become what they essentially are is merely to beg all of the questions discussed in this paper, and more. For in order to put meat on such a skeletal statement of the counselor's role, the counselor must be able to understand and accept that client as he is, to assess the client's and his own resources for healing, and have some idea of what it means to move toward increased health or

essentiality. It was to assist counselors interested in a Christian view of man to outline the basic assumptions needed to define their role that this paper was written.

A STUDY IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE  
OF SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF MAN  
AS THEY RELATE TO THE WORK OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COUNSELORS

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What is the nature of the human condition? Does the religious concept of sin add to an understanding of man's predicament? How can the notions of healing and health be usefully defined? These questions outline the problem discussed in this paper, which is a study of some basic assumptions about the nature of man. The questions are of primary importance of psychologists and counselors, for it is their presuppositions concerning man that underlie empirical research, and define the goals of psychotherapy.

Since one's concept of human nature is based on preconceptions or beliefs, a fundamental point of view is necessary in order to discuss man. The author draws upon his Christian faith to supply the basic viewpoint, and raises the question of man initially in the context of T. S. Eliot's play, The Cocktail Party, which is an expression of the playwright's Christian beliefs. The writings of Paul Tillich are used to provide a specific theological framework for the presentation of a Christian perspective on man.

Tillich offers new insights into the meaning of sin, which he calls the human predicament. His helpful synonym for sin is estrangement, a word that is given significance by existentialist approach to theology is useful, both in clarifying Christian concepts, and in providing a means of comparing the Christian position with the basic assumptions of a number of contemporary psychologists.

Tillich describes the human predicament in terms of individual freedom and universal destiny--the polar conditions, so to speak,

within which man exists. Some of the so-called "Third Force" psychologies referred to by Abraham Maslow are examined in the light of this understanding of man's predicament. Each is seen to describe certain aspects of the "elements of destiny," which Tillich defines as the factors which condition man's freedom. For instance, Sidney Jourard's concern with the roles that men play, and Maslow's theory of human instinctoid needs, both illustrate the so-called elements of destiny that affect man's life. But insofar as these psychologists speak of human self-actualization and autonomy, they allow room for the concept of sin, which entails, as well, man's finite freedom and personal responsibility as part of his predicament.

The ways in which psychologists' and counselors' assumptions about man affect their notions of healing and health are discussed in Chapter IV. A Christian view of health is first outlined, based on Tillich's appraisal of Jesus the Christ as the source and the criterion of human well-being. Current concepts of mental health are reviewed, following which the ideas of Jourard, Maslow, Rollo May, and Carl Rogers are examined as possible fruitful ways of understanding health in psychological terms. Rollo May, especially, shows that health is basically an ontological question, and he suggests that the goal of psychotherapy is to increase the sense of being in the client. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the theology of Carl Rogers, which is an example of ways in which the basic assumptions of psychology and Christian theology may actually meet and overlap.

This report leaves many questions unanswered, some of which are

suggested in the final chapter. Is man good or evil? What is human nature? What is the counselor's role? It is questions such as these, and their many implications, that led to the writing of this study, so that counselors and psychologists might be aware of how their fundamental presuppositions affect their work, and consider them from a religious point of view.



